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ABSTRACT

This collection of papers includes the following: "On the Educational Uses of Fantasy" (Geoffrey Madoc-Jones and Kieran Egan); "The Dangers of Empathy with Students" (Mario Rinvolucri); "The Magic of Folktales for Teaching English and Culture" (Planaria Price); "The Inner Voice: A Critical Factor in L2 Learning" (Brian Tomlinson); "Dance: An Inspiration for Language in the ESL Classroom" (Carolee Bongiorno); "Reader's Theatre: An Introduction to Classroom Performance" (Gerald Lee Ratliff); "Novels and Films in the Elementary School Foreign Language Class" (Jacqueline Garcon); "Using Poetry to Build Classroom Communities" (C. Hood Frazier); "Literary Pantomimes: Students' Dynamic Creations" (John Joseph Courtney); "The Power of Dramatizing Case Studies in ESP" (Russell Dinapoli); "English Through Opera" (Ninah Beliavsky); "The Dress-Up Biography in ESL Reading" (Denise Lagos and Susan Khodabakshi); "The Emotions: A Vocabulary Before Language" (James E. Lennon and Paul Barbato); "Choice + Interest = Enthusiasm for Target Language" (Greg Briscoe); "The Fun Hypothesis: Creative Language in the EFL Class" (Laura Renart); "Neuro-Linguistic Programming: A Basis for Language Learning" (Marion H. Love); and "Using the Native Language Imaginatively in Foreign Language Textbooks" (Hana Zofkova). (Papers contain references.) (SM)

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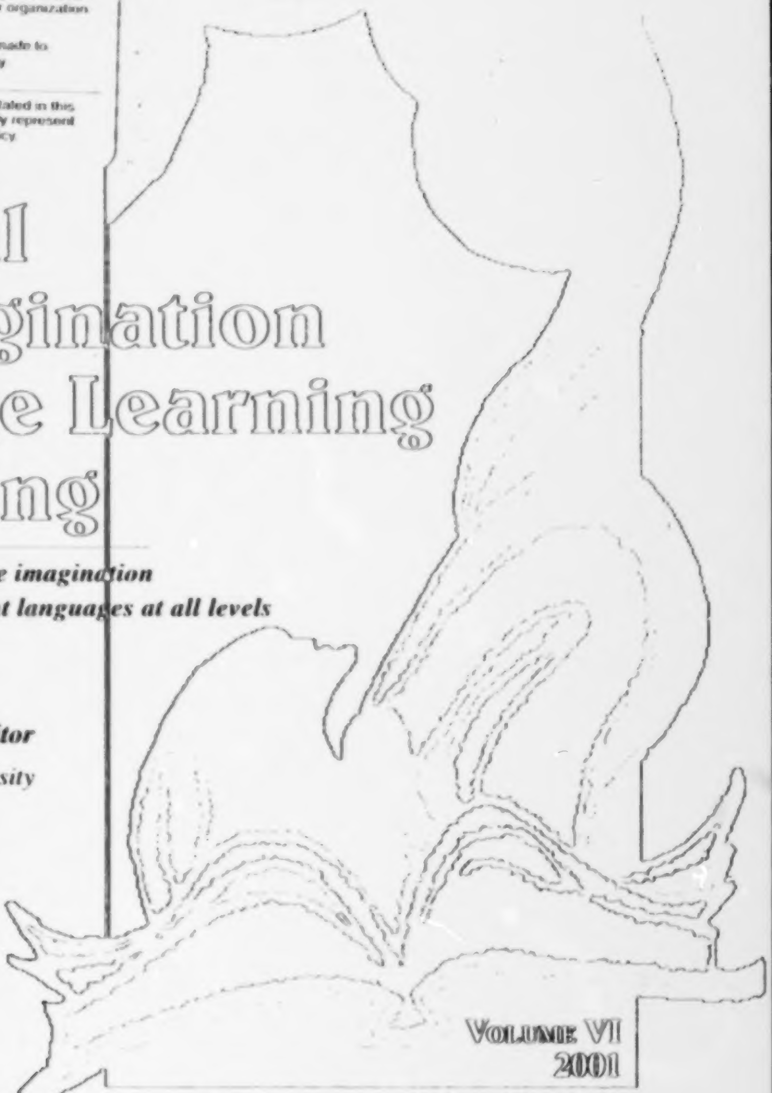
The Journal Of the Imagination In Language Learning And Teaching

A publication dedicated to the role of the imagination in the acquisition of first and subsequent languages at all levels



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About This Publication

The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching is published annually by the Center for the Imagination in Language Learning at the New Jersey City University (Web site: <www.njcu.edu/CILL/cill.htm>. E-mail: <cill@njcu.edu>. The 12th Annual Conference on the Role of the Imagination in Language Learning will be sponsored by the Center on April 27, 2001. Although the sessions at that meeting take up the same issues, the *Journal* selects and publishes articles independently of the Conference. Articles from this publication are abstracted in *Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts* and in *Sociological Abstracts*.

This *Journal* is concerned with the following proposition: Attempts to acquire a language are significantly enhanced by the presence of an activated imagination. Both theoretical and practical articles or proposals for articles that are related to this broad area are welcome and should be addressed to Dr. Clyde Coreil, Editor; *The Journal of the Imagination*; Hepburn Hall, Room 111; New Jersey City University; Jersey City, New Jersey, USA 07305-1597. Dr. Coreil can be reached at Telephone: 201-200-3087. Voice Mail 201-200-3237. E-mail: <*rcoreil@njcu.edu*>, and <*coreil@erols.com*>. The Fax number for the *Journal* is 201-200-2202 or 201-200-3238. In the near future, the text of all issues at least two years old will be available in their entirety at no charge on our internet site, which is scheduled to be redesigned in the Academic Year 2000-2001. Upon completion in June, 2001, the site will become a major resource for all language instructors and the teachers of such instructors. It will have approximately 100 articles on the theory and practice of imaginative methods relevant to all languages and all levels–kindergarten through college.

The major illustrations for Volume VI were drawn by Agnes Kryston and Samantha Hayes, art majors at the University. The cover and incidental drawings are by Kalliroi Antoniou, an alumnus. The editors wish to express appreciation to Mr. Ron Bogusz, Director of the Office of Publications and Special Programs at New Jersey City University, who has designed all issues.

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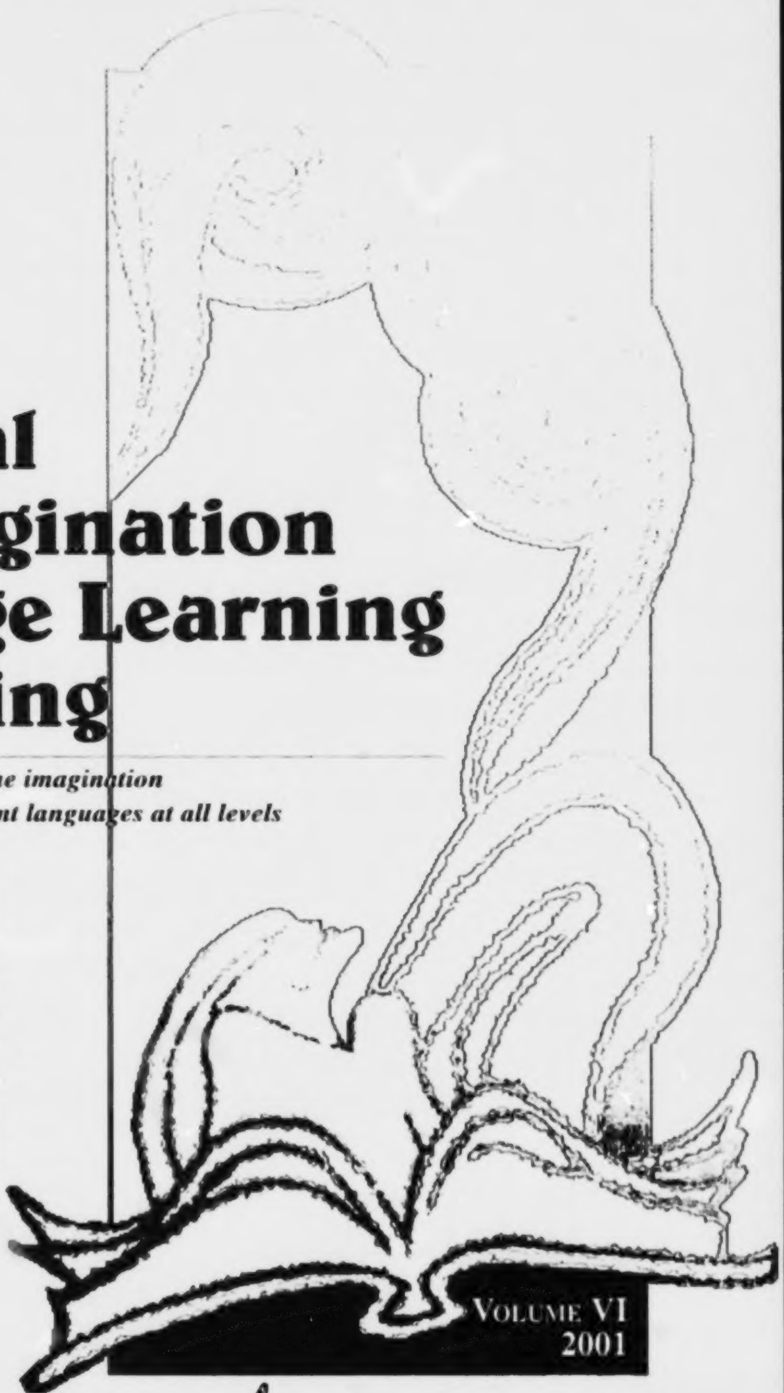

The Journal Of the Imagination In Language Learning And Teaching

A publication dedicated to the role of the imagination in the acquisition of first and subsequent languages at all levels

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Introduction

With this issue, the word "Teaching" has been added to the already-longish title of this *Journal*. Mainly, this is due to a wish to be more precise in communicating our interests, which include both the acquisition and the teaching of language, and their points of intersection with the imagination. Does this include first-language acquisition? Definitely: if the particular article makes substantial reference to the imagination. Does it include psychological aspects of young children communicating through play while their lexicon develops? You bet: play involves the imagination. Hence the article this year on that topic by Lennon and Barbato. In keeping this focus through six annual volumes of our publication, we have become one of the world's foremost sources of information on the methodology and theory related to language study and the imagination. As such, it is highly advisable that elementary, secondary and college teachers–as well as professors in graduate language education courses– have this material on hand for reference and for more active use in their classes.

If we realy believe this unabashed claim–and we do–then it is incumbent on us to do something to make the contents of older volumes easily available. Accordingly, during the 2000-2001academic year, we will put the text of all articles that are at least two years old on the internet free of charge. No fees or identification of any kind will be required. Although this material is copyrighted, we will permit the printing and copying of it for personal or class use. We do not, however, grant permission to anyone to publish or sell this material electronically or in a bound volume. For research purposes, we would appreciate notification via fax, regular mail or e-mail of the article(s) you are using, the number of copies you are making, and any comments on this service or on the article itself. Such notification is not required. To access the site, simply go to: <www.njcu.edu/CILL/cill.htm>

If you are not familiar with *The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching* you might like to know our central hypothesis: "Attempts to learn a language are significantly enhanced by the presence of an activated imagination." Accordingly, we focus on the theory and practical applications of this principle at all levels–kindergarten through college. Our articles span a very wide range of topics including rock music, art, dance, storytelling, Broadway musicals, puppets, fiction, drama, fairy-tales, pantomime, opera, poetry, fantasy, impersonation, reader's theatre, therapeutic play, folktales, the inner voice, and theoretical reflections on topics like the language ego and multiple intelligences. The number of articles on such topics in Volume One through the present Volume Six exceeds 100.

We have published authors living in Cuba, China, Ecuador, France, Canada, Argentina, Singapore, Thailand, England, Spain, Ukraine, The Czech Republic, Japan, Israel, Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, Venezuela, Russia, and of course, the USA. Our writers have included such first-rate talents as James J. Asher, Carolyn Graham, Earl Stevick, Richard Tucker, Mary Ann Christison, Alan Maley, Gertrude Moskowitz, Rebecca M. Valette, Jean Zukowski-Faust, Henry Widdowson, Diane Larsen-Freeman, Elana Shohamy, Kieran Egan, and David Nunan. Our interests are not limited to ESL but extend to all aspects of the acquisition and teaching of any first or subsequent language.

International Organization for Imagination in Language Acquisition

We are very much interested in participating in a global network of publications, conferences, situations and even conversations that are related to the idea that the imagination is an extremely powerful resource in language acquisition–a resource that comes built into the human psyche and psychology, that is free of cost, and that yearns to be used. It would seem that everyone and his brother would realize this and incorporate it into strategies of teaching and learning. Such is not the case. Some of the biggest enemies of imaginative methodology seems to be sheer reticence, fear of ridicule by one's students, and the wish for approval from one's supervisors who must in turn be approved by boards and presidents whose memory of foreign languages consists of memorized grammar and fill in the blanks.

This is lamentable and, unfortunately, nearly universal. As a counter-move, I suggest that advocates of creativity and imagination in theory as well as in the classroom come together to form a very loose association that might be called something like "The International Organization for the Imagination in Language Acquisition—IOILA." Membership is free. There will be no meetings or officers. The only requirement is that the member consider the possible importance of the imagination in language acquisition. We at this Journal will support you in any way possible–from publishing reports of upcoming or past conferences or events of a smaller nature, to writing quite formal letters, for example, to your supervisor or principal. Persons who wish to declare their interest will be published in the next issue of this *Journal*–Volume Seven.Welcome to the fold!

We would also be delighted to have you attend our 12th Annual Conference on the Role of the Imagination in Language Learning at our campus on Friday, April 27, 2001. There will be approximately 400 educators attending a keynote address and some 20, seventy-minute workshops in three time periods, ending at 3 p.m. Early enough to return to your hotel and take a nap before hitting Broadway, which is across the river from our University. A continental breakfast is included at our Conference, the fee for which is a grand total of $15. If it sounds too good to be true, then make your reservations as early as possible, and thank Dean Ansley LaMar of our University's College of Arts and Sciences for quietly supporting it year after year. He does deserve at least a thank-you note for what he has done for all of us.

Clyde Coreil

On the Educational Uses of Fantasy

Geoffrey Madoc-Jones and Kieran Egan

Geoff Madoc-Jones was brought up in Wales, where he completed his initial degree at the University of Wales. He went to Canada in 1970, lived in a remote area, taught Language Arts, first in schools and then at Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. He recently completed his Ph.D. in hermeneutics and literary education.

Kieran Egan was born in Ireland, educated in England, and did his Ph.D. in education at Cornell University. A recent book that gives the best introduction to his work is The Educated Mind: How Cognitive Tools Shape our Understanding *(University of Chicago Press, 1997).*

Introduction

For more than a century, teachers of young children have been told that they should begin instruction in any area with content that is already familiar to the child. From Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) in particular, and repeated by so many other influential educators and psychologists, such as John Dewey and Jean Piaget, we have been told that children's understanding begins with the concrete, the local, the empirical, the simple and moves over the years in the direction of the abstract, the distant, the rational, and the complex. If this is true, how do we account for the prominence of fantasy in young children's minds? It is neither concrete, local, empirical, nor simple—and it certainly isn't made up of material familiar in the child's everyday environment.

If we tell a story that involves characters moving from one place to another, what difference does it make to have them travel by bus or by magic carpet? Is the latter mode of transport a lie that at best creates false hopes and feeds an illusory longing for an unattainable world, or is it a liberation of the mind, a stimulus to the imagination, that enables us to think about our real world more effectively? Is the concrete, local, empirical bus more accessible than the magic carpet? We would like, in the following pages, to reflect a little on the source of fantasy, and then explore briefly some classroom implications of what we find. So we need first to have some sense of what fantasy is. Where does it come from, and why is it so prominently a part of young children's mental lives?

The Source of Fantasy

Some people believe that children's belief in fantasy is a result of the kinds of stories they are told when they don't understand the limits of reality. Certainly adults very commonly encourage belief in odd creatures like Santa Clause or the tooth fairy, and even discourage children's developing skepticism about these shadowy figures. (How DOES a single fat man manage to get down the chimneys of ALL the houses in the world in the one night?) And what tortures must the budding skeptical child face dealing with the adult assertion that children who don't believe in Santa Clause won't get any presents?

Surveys suggest that as many as 60% of children have quite complexly realized "imaginary friends," and nearly all children engage in pretend play of one kind or another. Adults have tended to look on this as evidence that children confuse reality and fantasy in ways that adults don't. The child's wish for some magical occurrence, like a magic carpet or the disappearance of that horrible new baby, is seen as different in kind from the adult who kneels in prayer for similar interruptions of the course of nature. The percentage of children who believe in tooth fairies is fairly close to that of adults who believe that aliens have visited the earth. Around 60% of the adult population of the U.S.A. believes strongly or somewhat in the influence of astrology; around 50% believe that walking under a ladder will lead to something bad happening later; about 50% believe in demonic possession. And large numbers accept the claims of a few magicians who seem able to use their powers over nature only to bend perfectly harmless forks, and, less magically, to increase their bank balances. As Carl Johnson has put it: "The problem...is that whereas adults are readily aware of myths they have outgrown, they are blind to ones that they currently hold to be real" (1997, p. 1024.) Also, it is now clear, as it wasn't even a few decades ago, that children by age three do not confuse their imaginary worlds with reality; they recognize differences between the rules of their magical worlds and the everyday routines they have to slog through (cf. Woolley, 1997).

Now this is not to say that children's fantasy is nothing other than typical adult thinking, with just a different set of delusions prominent. We would worry about the C.E.O. of a large corporation we had invested in who routinely turned running the company over to his imaginary bear-friend (unless the bear improved profits). But we don't worry about children's imaginary play. We know that by age 8 or 10 nearly all children will have given up their belief in magic, will have passed through a wall behind which the imaginary friends of childhood will languish, ignored and forgotten. We might wisely reconsider this large-scale desertion of childhood fantasy; Peter Pan's shock at finding that his earlier companions had forgotten how to fly is so evocative because it captures not simply regret for carefree childhood time. It also captures an insight that most people are sacrificing some cognitive powers that are strong in childhood, are evident in fantasy, and which need not be given up in entering the "real world" of adulthood. J. M. Barrie's fable of Peter Pan delivers a powerful message. He tells us that an adult life that has failed to preserve the imaginative vitality of childhood is a kind of living death, as is an endless childhood that never reaches maturity. Both are disasters and wastes of life, but the unnecessary giving up of a fluent imagination is perhaps our greater shame today.

Self-Generating Fantasy

That fantasy is not merely a result of adult's telling such stories to children is suggested clearly by the fact that fantasy is a cultural universal: it is energetically active in all cultures, and it seems irrepressible. Consider one attempt to dispense with fantasy described by K. Chukovsky in his fascinating book From Two to Five (1963). Chukovsky describes how the dogma of social realism was applied to the instruction of some children during the early decades of the Soviet Union. He illustrates one effect through a diary kept by E. I. Stanchinskaia, a scientist and mother, of the development of her son to age seven. She wrote that it was her purpose "to replace the unrealistic folk tales and fantasies with simple realistic stories taken from the world of reality and from nature." She strictly ensured that her son learned about nothing except what could be empirically verified. And the result? Well, as she reports faithfully in her diary, her son generated his own fantasies from morning to night—he declared that a red elephant came to live in his room, that he had an imaginary friend, that his mother must be careful not to sit on that chair because she ought to be able to see the bear sitting there, that the rug he sat on was a ship, that he was a reindeer when it snowed, that he had just bought his mother a baby tiger, and so on and on. He behaved as one might expect any imaginative child to behave, generating a fantasy world even though no hint of fantasy had been allowed to infect him.

Children themselves support the claim that fantasy has a special attraction for them. When asked what kinds of stories they like best, typical groups of first-graders name a wide variety of stories. But the top preferences, recorded in a wide survey of some years ago, were for "an animal who could talk," "a prince and a princess," and "a magic ring." Least favorite were real-life stories about "what an astronaut does," "a person on T.V.," and "building a bridge" (Favat, 1977).

A Product of the Languaged Mind

We would like to propose that fantasy just comes along with language. That is, fantasy is primarily a product of the languaged mind, and so we might look at early language development for clues as to where fantasy originates. Consider how young children begin to gain a languaged grasp over the world. The toddler is sitting in a high-chair and touches a cup of milk directly from the refrigerator. Fingers are withdrawn with a frown. "Cold," says the mother. Attracted by an open fire, the toddler walks towards it until the father puts out a protective arm. "Hot," says the father. Children first notice, necessarily, temperatures that are hotter and colder than their bodies, and typically begin their languaged grasp over temperature with words like "hot" and "cold." The child can then learn a word like "warm"—that comfortable temperature about the same as the body's own. Putting a cautious toe or finger towards the bath water, the child can announce "hot!" if it is too hot or "cold!" if it is too cold, and the parent can encourage the child with assurances that it is just beautifully "warm." Further temperature terms, such as "cool' or "pretty hot" can be learned to fit along the continuum from hot to cold.

This way of learning to grasp the world in language and concepts is clearly very common. Young children first learn opposites based on their bodies—"hot" is hotter than the body, "cold" is colder; "big" is bigger than their body, "small" is smaller; "hard" is harder than the body, "soft" is softer; and so on. Young children learn a great deal about the world using this procedure—wet/dry, rough/smooth, fast/slow, and so on. Once they have formed an opposition, they can learn other terms along the continuum between such opposites.

The Generating of Fantasy

While they are very young, most children learn that some things are alive, like us and the cat and birds, and other things are dead. Perhaps it might be the death of a pet, or a dead bird brought into the house by a cat, or perhaps the idea of death might be learned through a story or by the experience of their own or a friends' grandparent or great-grandparent dying. Most of us learned the opposition life/death long before we can remember. What do you get when you apply to those opposites the same procedure that has been so successful in gaining a conceptual grasp over the physical world? What fits between "life" and "death," as "warm" fits between "hot" and "cold"? Well, ghosts, for example. Ghosts are to life and death as warm is to hot and cold. A ghost is a mediation between life and death; ghosts are in some sense alive and in some sense dead.

When children are three or four years old, they might tell their cat or pet rabbit all their secrets. But the animal will not tell them its secrets back. Or, at least, it will not tell them in the language the child uses. Some cultures would put this differently, of course. Some cultures do claim that animals communicate with humans. But all cultures recognize a fundamental distinction between human and animal. Human/animal, like life/death, are opposites that do not have a mediating category; they are not ends of a continuum, but discrete concepts. So what do we get if we try to mediate between them, if we treat them as though they are not discrete and *are* ends of a continuum? Well, we get creatures like mermaids, Yetis, Big Foot—those half-human, half-animal creatures that are so familiar to the Western imagination and that are common in the mythologies of all oral cultures.

Nature and Culture

A two-year-old may stub a toe against a chair and, in pain, hit the chair, only to be in more pain. It becomes clear very early that chairs don't have intentions or feelings like the child's. If we take a toddler for a stroll in the woods, the child comes to recognize that a tree that has fallen over and has saplings growing out of it is a natural object. But the tree that has had a bench carved into it so that weary toddlers and their grandparents can sit and rest for a few minutes has been culturally transformed. Before we can remember, we distinguish at a profound level between nature and culture. Typical three-year-olds will not use terms like "nature" and "culture," of course, but "made" or "real" or some other terms will reflect their recognition of the distinction. So what do you get when you mediate between this further discrete opposition, nature/culture? Well, for one thing, you get Peter Rabbit. That is, you get all those talking, dressed, middle-class animals of children's fantasy stories—natural animals mixed with the archetypal cultural capacity of language-use. Peter Rabbit is to nature and culture as a ghost is to life and death or warm is to hot and cold.

If we listen to toddlers' stunningly rapid language development—from eighteen months to adolescence, the average child learns a new word every few waking hours—we may notice a common, powerful, and very successful procedure in use for elaborating a conceptual grasp over the world around them. Oppositions are created from continua of size, speed, temperature, texture, and also, of course, of morality—so we get good/bad, love/hate, fear/security, and so on. The world is inconvenient in facing us with such discrete categories as life/death, human/animal, nature/culture, and, in the modern world, human/machine. What one finds in the invented mediations between these categories are the stuff of all the fantasy stories and myths of the world, from zombies to werewolves to talking ravens, and from Frankenstein's monster to Mr. Data of Star Trek.

Is that all there is to it? Fantasy is simply a product of misapplying one of the procedures by which we learn about the physical world? Well, it does have the virtues of simplicity and economy as an explanation. But obviously this is not all that needs to be said about fantasy, and no doubt the theories of Freud and Jung may help to elaborate other dimensions of it. The explanation given here, however, is certainly plausible and accounts for the common forms of fantasy in a surprising and convincing way. (We stole it in part from Claude Levi-Strauss [1966]).

One implication of this explanation is that fantasy is inevitable, given the way language grapples with the complexity of the world. This explanation also supports those who claim that fantasy is not simply idle confusion. Fantasy may represent a kind of confusion, but it involves also a meditation on some of the basic questions that face us: Why and how are we unlike other animals? Why do we die, and what is death? Why

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and how does our culture separate us from the natural world? Fantasy, if our account is at all accurate, works by a complex use of metaphoric thinking, generating objects by seeing them as invented mediations between known categories. If we see fantasy in this way, what are the implications for teaching young children, and what role should fantasy play?

Fantasy in Early Childhood Education

One important value for children in dreaming up fantasies, as in reading literature, lies in what fantasy can do in helping their development. Thus we might encourage fantasies which involve playful re-descriptions of the world and lead to asking questions about the child's self-understanding. Such questions typically project a world of new possibilities for the child to play with, to consider, to try out. It allows the child to play with *as if* worlds. In this sense, fantasies are fundamentally metaphoric and playful, for they allow the child to see something *as if* it were something else: my father *as if* he were a giant, the garden gate *as if* it were a faithful steed, or the box which the new fridge came in as *if* it were a space-ship. However, they also allow a more important form of imaginative fantasy, which entails the child not seeing something *as if* it were something else, but imagining herself *as* something or somebody else. It allows the *being-as* in addition to the *seeing-as:* I am not just seeing an image in my mind of the prince or the pauper or the flying carpet, I become them, all of them if the story requires it. I can inhabit their world and see through their eyes.

These modes of *seeing-as* and *being-as* are of course intertwined. The metaphoric nature of language allows for the fantasy of *being-as,* which then becomes an image through the *seeing-as.* But the fantasy does not need to be merely visual, as the child can move, can act, and can speak as if she were the beings which she has imagined herself to have become. Furthermore, the fantasy can be part of play with others in which the fantasy is extended to include a whole world in which the participants can carry on a fantasy life.

Being Played by the Game

The play aspect of fantasy is important because of its capacity for projected realness. It enables the child to step out of her subjectivity and to be governed by the rules of the game. In fact all games are part of such structured fantasies in which the rules of the game make the child act as a goalkeeper or a chess player and not as Bill or Mary. The important part about play is, therefore, not so much the pre-game subjectivity that the player brings into the game, but being played by the game. The child willingly submits to the rules and conventions of the game. Not to do so breaks the spell and makes one a "spoil sport". Children develop all sorts of fantasy play situations with highly complex structures to which they surrender their everyday selves in order to take on the possibilities of a world that they normally would not be able to experience.

The Child's Self-Understanding

All of these aspects of fantasy, *seeing-as, being-as* and *play* are important for the child's emerging sense of self-understanding. They will happen without the intervention of the teacher, but they also provide a most important way in which the teacher can encourage the development of understanding in general. In terms of language arts teaching, they provide the necessary pre-conditions for the capacity to read, understand, and enjoy literature. Child-developed fantasies should be encouraged and gradually twinned with the reading of fantasy stories which have been written specially for children. They will easily recognize the element of "make-believe" in the fairy tales or in C.S. Lewis' stories, for example, and will be able to take part in them in a fuller manner. Later on in their school lives when they come to read more "serious" literature, this early experience with imaginative fantasy will enable them to "walk in the shoes" of the characters.

Narrative Identity and the Sense of the Self

The second important element in imaginative fantasies is that they can enable children to see themselves as having a "narrative identity." This is important to educators who see that part of their task in the teaching of narratives, both fictional and historical, is to assist students' quests for personal identity, by assuring the continuity between their seemingly inchoate stories and an actual story for which they can assume responsibility. We tell stories because human lives make sense to us only in narrative terms (MacIntyre, 1990, p. 39).

Humans are entangled in their untold stories to which narrative gives form and meaning. The pre-narrative capacity of human imagination exists and acts always and already in the world in a symbolically significant manner, because we are time-bound beings and the world and our lives become meaningful through a process of temporalization, our recollected pasts merge with our dreams of the future.

Fantasy can thus play a number of important roles in the language arts classroom. First, it allows the child to posit possible worlds in which she can try out all sorts of modes of being—human, animal, or inanimate—as part of the journey of self discovery. Second, these fantasy worlds can be acted out through play in a social setting, so as to build common understanding with others. Third, the narrative element in fantasy enables the child to see her life as a story, one that began before her birth and which will go on as long as time lasts. Finally, the fantasy experience, when gradually melded with the reading of adult-authored fantasy tales, forms the foundation for the child to be able to play a full part in any future literary education.

Conclusion

Children's attraction to fantasy may be because they have not yet been taught to ignore its importance. The claim by many educators that children's understanding begins with the "here and now" implies that the "here and now" is a transparent world that can be easily understood just by looking at the objects in the world, a red wheel barrow glazed with rain, for example. But if reality is as simple as that, what is a poet such as William Carlos Williams going on about in his poem *The Red Wheelbarrow* or Vincent van Gogh in his painting *Old Boots with Laces?* The world is a lot more complex than the practical people would have us believe, and they are in danger of denying the ineffable by turning the mysterious into just another problem to be solved. The reality is that all-important understandings about self and the world can be glimpsed and grasped only tenuously.

In getting students to work with fantasy, we are not merely providing an opportunity for them to have a release from cognitive cramming, but we may in fact be bringing them nearer to a valuable way in which humans have made sense of themselves and the world since antiquity. The word "fantasy" is derived from the Classical Greek word, "phantasia," which means "making visible." This was translated into Latin as "imaginatio," from which our modern word "imagination" is descended. Over the centuries, the two words have continued to be used, but for some reason, words derived from the original Greek term, phantasia, such as "fantasy," "fancy," or "phantasm," seem to have come to connote unreality and became less educationally respectable than the Latin-based "imagination" and its cognates.

Giambattista Vico, an eighteenth century philosopher, gives us another hint when he notes that while in Latin the word "imaginatio" represented the faculty of the soul that is capable of forming images, the act of imagining itself was called "memorare"—to remember (Vico, 1982, p. 69). It seems that what we have are states of mind and activities—fantasy, imagination, and memory—which seem to be all connected. They are all part of the way in which we as humans interpret and make sense of the world in an active, creative manner through the mediation of language and other symbolic forms. The educational justification for using fantasy is becoming clearer; we neglect its promise at our students' peril.

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The Dangers of Empathy with Students

Mario Rinvolucri teaches English as a Foreign Language, trains teachers, and writes book at Pilgrims, Canterbury, UK. His latest book, Ways of Doing, *with Barbara Garside and Paul Davis, came out with Cambridge early in 1999.*

Mario Rinvolucri

Empathy is to teaching as oxygen is to human survival, If a teacher doesn't have the wish to see and feel things somehow from the student's point of view, then maybe she can present information but she cannot teach. Interestingly the verb "teach" takes the topic as direct object: e.g. "I teach micro-biology" but it also takes the receiver of the information as direct object: "I taught her physics." For the sentence "Mary taught John ornithology" to be true, Mary needs to have some way of feeling close to to the way she understands John to perceive birds; that is, she needs to have some empathy with him in this area.

The Slow-Speaking Club

I don't know about you, but when I start work with a new group of students one of my main intentions is to quickly establish what rapport I can with each person and with the group as a whole. I use a gamut of exercises that seek to bring people into the group, into empathetic rapport with each other and with me. I can't imagine not investing time, at the beginning of a class, in this sort of basic human engineering. When I work with a student on a one-to-one basis, I use the empathy-achieving techniques that I have learnt from counselling, psychodrama and Neuro-Linguistic Programming [NLP]. So, for example, I match my breathing to that of the student so as to have some reliable access to what mood she or he is in. I tend to speak slowly to slow-speaking students to help them to perceive me as as co-member of the sensible, reasonable "slow-speaking club," etc.

A Misleading Edge

All the above needs to be said so you realise where I am coming from in pointing up the dangers that can be inherent in empathy, at least, for some people. Let me explain the idea I have of this danger area by using Columbus's achievement as a sort of metaphor. In three little caravelles, he reached right across the vast ocean to the other continent: he effectively bridged the gap between. He reached right over to the edge of the other. This is just what happens when a person tries to achieve empathetic rapport with another. Columbus' mistakes were to arbitrarily decide that where he had got to was where he had intended to get to, and that the edge of the other WAS the other. When a person gets into good rapport with another, they have achieved "edge overlap," they have not mapped the whole continent. And yet the achievement of the human closeness of rapport can make a person feel they understand the whole from the edge. An ability to get rapport and to feel things a bit from inside the other's skin leads to the danger of thinking you can really see the world from their point of view–empathetic rapport can lull you into ignoring your own vast ignorance of the other and the world they inhabit.

Videotaping Charles

Let me give you an example of this from an encounter I had with deaf teachers who taught sign language to hearing people. I was invited to tell them about new methodological ideas from English Language Teaching that could be of use in teaching sign language to hearers. There were 30 signers of UK English in the group and one person who also knew American sign language. I decided to introduce them to Charles Curran's Community Language Learning. It worked this way. When one of the UK signers wanted to say something to someone across the circle, they called over the bi-lingual signer and signed to him in English. He then signed the same message back to them in American, and finally they signed their message in American across the circle. All of this was videoed. The bi-lingual signer was called by anybody who wanted to make an utterance. He was the teacher but he acted purely reactively. At the end of the free conversation, the group viewed the video tape and each participant in the conversation signed what he saw himself signing in

American on the screen back into English to check his comprehension of it.

Then Came the Feedback

While this was going on, I was completely out of the picture and thought I was watching a lot of people discovering Curran's marvellously democratic language learning method. I was really happy to see how well the session was going. Everybody seemed to be energetically enjoying themselves. I felt well in tune with what was going on. Then came the feedback. The first thing I felt was the wind generated by a lot very fast and angry signing. My interpreter was almost overwhelmed by the welter of questions he had to cope with all at once:

> "Is the teacher's role in this kind of teaching passive?"
>
> "When does the teacher do his job?"
>
> "Do you expect us to let our hearing students take over the class?"
>
> "You mean they sign exactly what they want?"
>
> "The only time we feel superior to hearing people is when we are teaching them. Are you suggesting we give this up?"

Rinvolucri explains the importance of perceiving personal boundaries correctly.

Was I in tune with them? I clearly hadn't had a clue as to where I had been for the last 45 minutes. The edge of the continent, as I had perceived it, had nothing to do with its interior. My ignorance was indeed vast, and the feeling of in-moodness and in tuneness with these people had given my a quite wrong sense of understanding when I understood zilch [nothing]. You cross the ocean in your caravelles, you reach the shore of the other, and you think you know something.

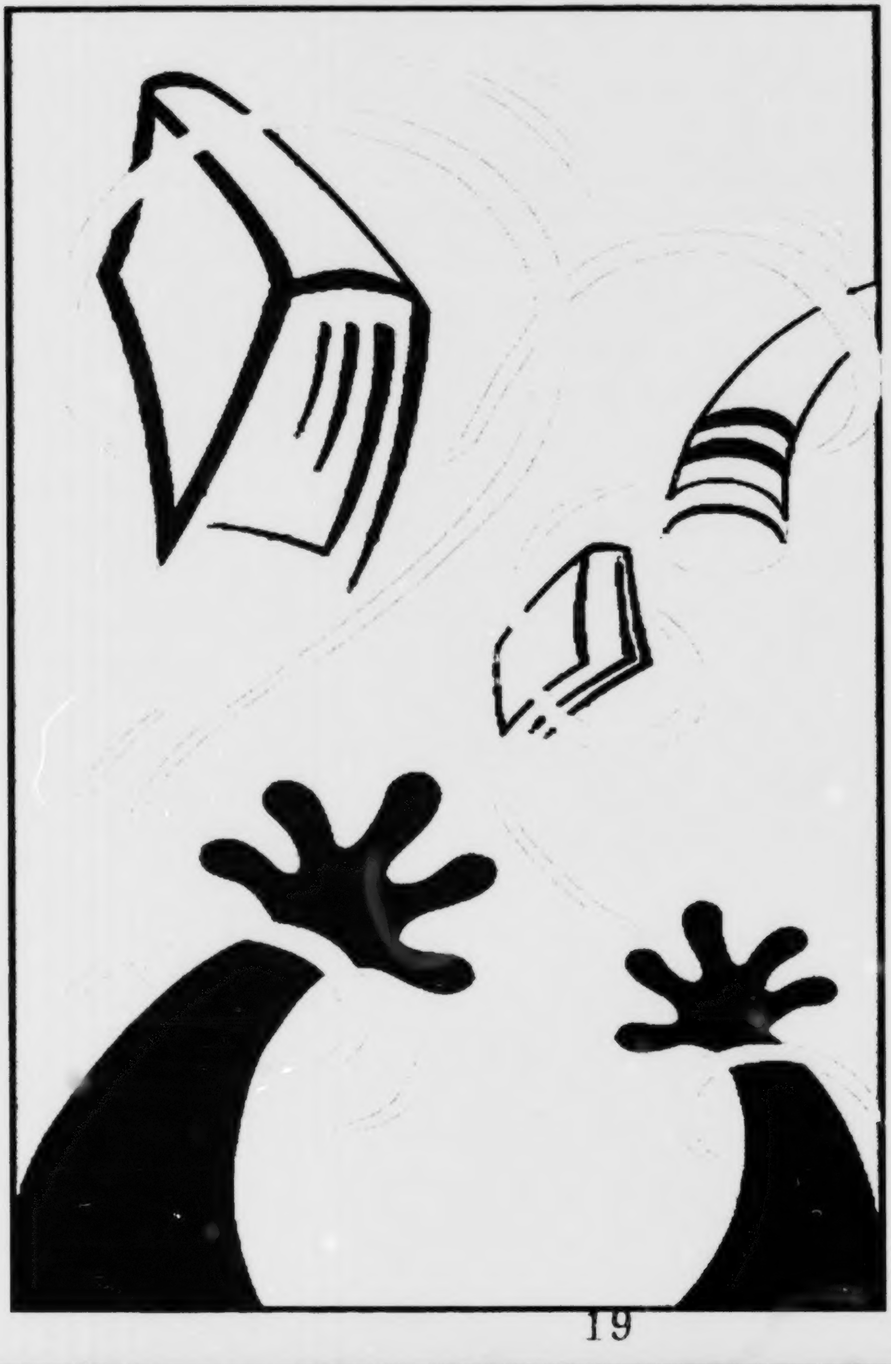
Bone-Chilling Realization

Here is a second example of this taken from *An Unquiet Mind*, by Kay Jainison (1995 Borzoi). As an undergraduate, the author helped a blind student with his studies: "I was very affected by working with him, seeing how difficult it was for him to do things I so much took for granted. As the term went on I felt increasingly comfortable in askng him about what it was like to be blind; what it was like to be blind, young and an undergraduate at UCLA, and what it was like to have to be so dependent upon others to learn and survive. After several months, I had deluded myself that I had at least some notion of, however small, of what life was like for him." She found the edge of the continent of the other.

One day the blind man asked her to meet him in the blind reading room in the University library. "I tracked down the reading room with some difficulty and then started to go in. I stopped suddenly when I realised with horror that the room was almost totally dark. It was dead silent, no lights were on, and yet there were half a dozen students bending over their books or listening intently to audiotapes of the professors' lectures they had recorded. A total chill went down my spine at the eeriness of the scene. It was one of those still, clear moments when you realise you haven't understood anything at all, that you have had no real comprehension of the other's person's world."

Exploring Continents

The image of exploring continents is one that I have found useful when thinking about meeting new students. Focusing on empathy and rapport is important to get me across the sea to the new continent, but landing on that beach does not give me a map of the mountain ranges, plains, valleys, deserts, forests, plateaux and lakes that lie beyond. As I gradually get to know the student, it is like a trans-continental journey, with periods of tedium, with moments of danger, with amazing surprises, with a continual, thrilled awareness of the person's otherness. Empathy is absolutely necessary to get me to the shores of the new continent, but it becomes troublesome if it makes me seriously think that I know where I am. It is just starting point on a journey of wonder.



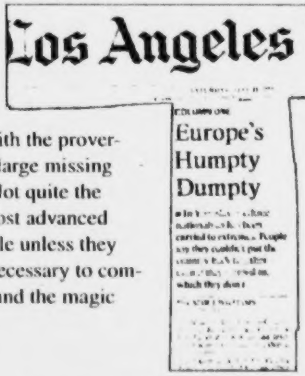
The Magic of Folktales for Teaching English and Culture

Planaria Price

Planaria Price, who has been teaching ESL for 27 years in Los Angeles, is the author of four textbooks: *Competency in English: a Life Skills Approach* (McGraw Hill, 1991), *Open Sesame: Understanding American English and Culture through Folktales and Stories* (University of Michigan Press, 1997), *Eureka! Discovering American English and Culture through Proverbs, Fables, Myths and Legends* (University of Michigan Press, 1999), and *Realistically Speaking: A Practical Approach to American Pronunciation* (University of Michigan, 2000). She is currently finishing a book on American history, and another on the dangerous ramifications of sanitizing folktales.

It all started with Humpty Dumpty.

Nine years ago, I was experimenting with new ways to teach American intonation to my adult Advanced ESL pronunciation class. Traditionally, Fridays were song days, but I was frustrated with the same-old chants and songs. On a whim, I tried some children's rhymes. After surprisingly great success with the *Five Little Monkeys*, I introduced *Humpty Dumpty*. The students loved the rhythm; they loved the idea of a riddle. The lesson was great fun; and a wonderful way to end my teaching week. Relaxing on Saturday, I picked up the "L.A. Times" and on the front page saw the headline "*Europe's Humpty Dumpty: In Yugoslavia...people say they couldn't put the country back together even if they wanted which they don't.*" What an incredible coincidence! In surprise and delight at the allusion, I jumped up, and, disregarding the spilled cup of coffee dripping off the table, had one of those classic cartoon moments with the proverbial light bulb floating in a balloon above my head. "Yes! Yes!" A large missing piece to the puzzle of teaching ESL had just fallen into my hand. Not quite the alchemist's stone, but close; quite close. I realized that even my most advanced ESL students would have completely missed the sense of that article unless they knew the original Humpty Dumpty rhyme—the cultural hook so necessary to complete the schemata for comprehension. Like Alice, I had finally found the magic key to let me into Wonderland.



Los Angeles Ti

Europe's Humpty Dumpty

A Member of the Family

That was May 11, 1991. As I write this article, nine years later, I have a collection of more than one hundred clipped newspaper and magazine articles, cartoons, and advertisements, plus notes from television, songs, movies and radio, alluding to Humpty Dumpty. Just by the weight and volume of evidence from the media, I have proven the urgent necessity that our ESL students be constantly exposed to the basic components of our cultural inheritance. Our students are like a visitor who moves into a tightly knit family. One member of the family will say a word, and everyone in the family will laugh except the visitor, on whom the "family joke" is lost. Not until the reference is explained, the experience shared, can the visitor become an integral, accepted, and comfortable member of that family. This discovery of the pressing need to introduce children's rhymes in the English language classroom led to my exploration of the use of children's stories, folk tales, fairy tales, fables and myths which finally led to my texts *Open Sesame* and *Eureka!*.

Grammar through Cinderella

I was timid at first. How would my adults accept *Cinderella*? Would they be offended that we were studying grammar and vocabulary by reading *Little Red Riding Hood?* What about showing them the classic videos of *Charlotte's Web* and the *Wizard of Oz?* Would they be too old? Are these stories only for the young? Was I wasting their time? With each experiment of a story, my students clamored for more, and I found more and more magic. First, the stories provide that elusive "cultural hook": the recognizable idiom, the core vocabulary, the allusions, the references used in common *adult* discourse. Besides comprehension, the students gained control of that magic wand called "empowerment":

> "Teacher, teacher! At the store I heard a teen-ager say, 'My parents turned me into a pumpkin when I came home late last night' and I knew what she meant!"

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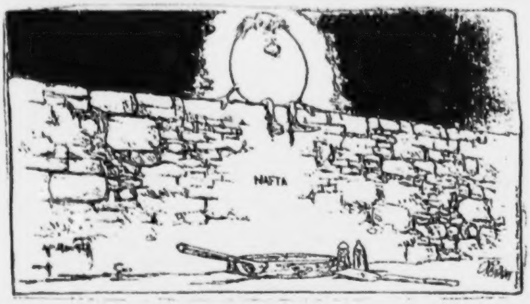
"Teacher, teacher, the weather man said tomorrow it won't be too hot or too cold, but juuuust right!"

"Teacher, teacher, there's a Cinderella shoe store on Third Street. Now I understand what they sell."

"Teacher, teacher, the reporter said the President had an Achilles' Heel, but not in his heel. He said the scandal would open Pandora's Box and we would be sorry."

I knew I had struck gold, and, Toto, I was no longer in Kansas. Now, overflowing from my file cabinets are myriad clippings from print and audio media; political cartoons, novels, ads, articles with allusions from *The Itsy Bitsy Spider, Little Miss Muffitt, the Hokey Pokey, Peter Piper, Fuzzy Wuzzy,* to the classic folktales, fairy tales, myths, legends, and proverbs. And there was more, so much more.



Political reference is made to President Clinton's support of the NAFTA trade agreement. (Oliphant(c) Universal Press Syndicate. Reprinted with permission. All rights reserved.)

Folktales and myths are not enduring and timeless without reason. They are universal in their delight and appeal to the human mind and heart. The stories captivate the students. Students love hearing them, reading them, discussing them. They get so involved in the stories that they stop translating, learning how to discover vocabulary through the context clues. They enthusiastically share similar stories from their own cultures. Their new knowledge is constantly reinforced by their finding allusions to the tales and vocabulary outside class.

Elbow, Edge, Sunrise

As the stories were originally meant to be oral, I read them aloud first and the students practice listening. In the beginning I was quite surprised by their trouble and confusion with the simplest words; *elbow, edge, sunrise, sorrow*. My adult students are considered advanced. They are at the highest ESL level (level 6 and 7) in my school. And I realized that because they were advanced foreign adult learners, they had never been taught the "baby words," the basic core vocabulary of English. No wonder there were gaping holes in their comprehension of everyday conversation!

In the beginning, we talked about the surface level of the story. We compared similar stories in their cultures. And then the real magic happened. It had started with *Humpty Dumpty,* but it was really the *Three Little Pigs* that pushed me over the edge to becoming who I am today: a folktale proselytizer with an ever-ready scissors for instant clipping of allusions to add to my burgeoning files of realia.

Let me tell you a story.

Once upon a time, there was a classroom of foreign adults. Their teacher was about to tell a story called *The Three Little Pigs,* but Samara made a terrible face. "Samara, are you OK?" asks the teacher. Samara answers, "Oh, teacher, we don't have stories about pigs in Syria. We do have a story about three little goats, but never pigs." Samara whispers with distaste on her lips. "Oh, we have a story about three little rabbits," says Trang shyly with a smile. It was the ninth week of the semester and neither woman had ever spoken in the class before. The teacher holds her breath. Something good is happening. She can't pin it down but there is some magic in the air.

"Well, once there were three little pigs who lived with their mother," says the teacher. "Their mother?" asks Jose. "We have that story in Mexico, but there are just three brothers living alone." Natasha agrees as does Kyoko. The teacher is surprised that Kyoko has heard the story in Japan, but doesn't want to break the spell with a question.

"One day the mother pig said to her three little pigs, "This house is too small for all of us to live here anymore. It is time for you piglets to go out into the world and make homes for yourselves." There is a palpable shock in the room. The face of each student is filled with a mixture of disbelief, dread and surprise. The teacher has often been described as having antenna, and her antenna are now pulsating, groping for clues. "What's the matter?" she asks.

"What kind of a mother would say that?" gasps Felipe.

"Say what?" asks the American teacher.

"Tell her children to leave home!"

"But they're old enough," says the teacher, thinking with a twinge of pain of her daughter's recent departure for college. All the students agree that there is something dysfunctional in this pig family. "Well, what would a mother in your story say?" questions the teacher. "Oh!" they all brighten up.

Price, left, uses realia in explaining fairy tales.

"Take care of each other," says Juan.

"Respect your older brother." says Ming.

"And listen to his advice," adds Maria.

"Don't open the door to strangers." says Samara.

"Be polite" says Trang, shyly.

"Well, maybe this is a bad mother. You don't have enough information yet, do you?" The teacher is thinking that this is a golden opportunity for the students to exercise their critical thinking. She is often amazed at how few of her students ever question anything; how they seem clueless at information gathering. It sometimes drives her crazy how complacent they are at accepting what a person in authority says. She often has them chant "Why? Why? Why?" for practice but it has not seemed to help. "Let's figure out if Mrs. Pig is a good or bad mother. If a mother in your culture told her children to leave home, what would her children say to her?" "Oh, Mommy please don't make us go." Oh! Mama, we will be good, please let us stay." "Mama, but who will stay and take care of you?" The students talk all at once.

The teacher smiles and reads on. "So the three little pigs said good-bye to their mother and went out into the world to make homes for themselves. 'See they just say good-bye and go. Maybe in this story she is a good mother and, like good children, they obey her. After all, she did say it was time.'" The teacher lets that idea sink in and will get back to that concept later. The students look uncomfortable.

"So the three little pigs went to a crossroads where… (*The teacher does not want to stop the momentum. On the second read, she'll go back and ask them for the symbolism of cross-roads: life as a journey, making the right choices. Maybe after the story is completely finished, she'll give them Robert Frost's "Two Roads." Maybe, if she's brave enough, she will give them the story of Oedipus).* "The first little pig sat down with a sigh." (*On the second read she'll ask them what happens when you just let things happen to you).* "The second little pig took a path that led into the deep woods." *(On the second read she will ask them to define the word path, and discuss its symbolism and elicit from them what a poor choice it is of the young, inexperienced pig to go where few have gone before, but it would be a shame to interrupt the story now).* "And the third little pig took the road toward town."

"Along came a man with a load of straw. The first little pig thought. 'Oh, it would be easy to build a house of straw' and said 'Please sir, may I have some straw?" *(On the second read the teacher will ask the students about the little pig…why was he punished? Was it because he was a bad son?…oh, no he obeyed his mother…was he rude? No, he is very polite, he says, please, sir).* "The man gave the first little pig the straw and one, two, three, the first little pig built himself a flimsy house of straw. But just as the first little pig finished building his house of straw, along came a hungry wolf. 'Little pig, little pig, let me come in!' 'No by the hair of my chinny chin chin, I will not let you in,' said the little pig. 'Then I'll huff and I'll puff and blow your house in,' said the wolf. And the wolf huffed and he puffed and he blew in the flimsy little house of straw. (*The teacher is really enjoying this story telling, now. She's on a roll. She can't believe the students' faces. She has made a knocking sound on the table when the wolf knocks at the door. She makes her voice very high when the piggy swears by his chin. She make her voice gruff when the wolf speaks. She huffs. She puffs. The students are actually rapt. She knows they aren't translating . She feels the magic and power of the English in the room.*

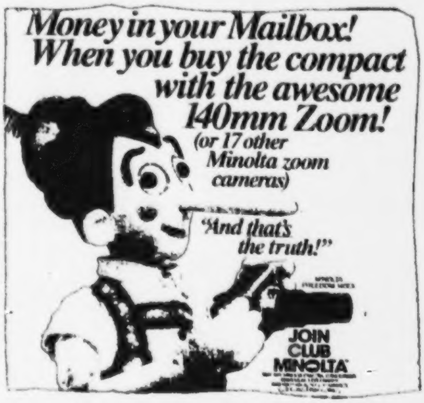
"And that, *(she licks her lips)* was the end (*she pats her stomach*) of the first little pig." There is an audible gasp. The faces of the whole class mirror shock. Even Mario, with his gang tattoos on his neck, looks anguished. "He ate him?" whispers Felipe. "The wolf ate the pig?" "Of course," says the teacher. "I bet you had bacon for breakfast this morning, so what's the problem?" The students are not amused. They are really, really upset.

The True Value of Folktales

Now let's close the curtain on this tale and come back to the real world of pedagogy. Was there magic occurring in that room? The story I tell is 100% true. I swear on my chinny, chin, chin. That first telling of the *Three Little Pigs* was my ESL epiphany. I could actually see bright flashes of light blinking *CULTURE! CULTURE!* I could hear my brain screaming, cheering: *"the students are actually absorbing culture and language. They are actually internalizing the complete experience."* It took a few more tellings to get all the details in place; to understand the true value of using folktales in an ESL classroom. Kozo Yamato helped a lot. Kozo put the final doubts to rest. Kozo reinforced the pedagogical and pragmatic value of using folktales in adult second language acquisition.

Prof. Kozo: A Member of the Family

Kozo was a professor of English Literature in Japan. He was in Los Angeles for vacation and often visited my class with his niece, my student. He didn't need the English, but he was curious about American culture. He often came in handy when I got stuck on explaining some tricky part of English grammar. Kozo was in my class the second time I taught *The Three Little Pigs*. As I finished with the huffing and puffing and the "No! by the hair of my chinny chin chin," the quiet and reserved Kozo shouted out, "That's it. I've got it." His vehemence startled me. His explanation, delighted. He'd seen the Jack Nicholson movie *The Shining* adapted from a book by Stephen King. It's quintessential King, a horror story of a family man possessed by Evil. In one scene the man (Nicholson) is chasing after his wife and son; he's carrying a hatchet. Terrified, the wife and child run into a bathroom to hide, locking the door. The possessed father knocks on the door and quietly, evilly says: "Little pigs, little pigs, let me come in!" For us, that says it all. The deep, subconscious childhood terror is evoked. The horror–a crazed father will kill (and eat?) his wife and child. For Kozo, a professor of English lacking the cultural hooks, it had meant nothing. Now, he finally understood, totally, intellectually and viscerally. He was now a member of the "family."


Money in your Mailbox!
When you buy the compact with the awesome 140mm Zoom!
(or 17 other Minolta zoom cameras)
"And that's the truth!"
JOIN CLUB MINOLTA

The story of Pinocchio is referred to in this Minolta newspaper advertisement.

A Core Value System

So what does it all mean? Can using folktales teach language faster and better than other methods? Yes, I believe it can. Fortunately, I no longer have to be tentative (as I was twenty years ago) when stating unequivocally that to truly acquire a language one must understand and embrace the culture. We humans say what we think; our thoughts and values come from our culture. We humans learned our first language and our core value system as children. We learned it easily, painlessly and with joy. We internalized and absorbed the sounds, the grammar, the meaning, the values before we were five years old. *The Three Little Pigs* is an excellent example. How did my daughter learn the correct order of adjectives and nouns: that it is number before color before object. By a rule? Or by hearing about the *three little* pigs and the *big bad* wolf and the *five little* monkeys and *little red riding* hood.

To take this much deeper, when and how did she know that she would be moving out of the house when she was eighteen, that to leave was normal. That it was just the way it was done. Did I say to her when she was three,"Well, just fifteen more years, and out you go!" Of course not. Without being lectured, she learned and internalized basic mainstream American values; she accepted, unquestioningly, to value going out into the world, being independent, making her own life, working hard, not being lazy. At eighteen my daughter went away to college. I cried. She cried. But it was time. It was time to go.

Without moralizing or hitting one on the head, the *Three Little Pigs* clearly teaches that when it's time to leave home and be independent, you go. It also stresses that those who are lazy fail. Those who work hard succeed. Very simply, with no frills, the story says of the third little pig, "He got some bricks, and he set to

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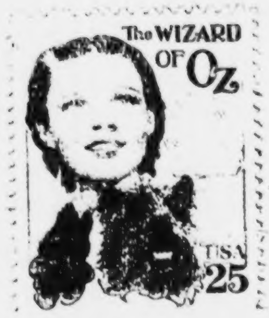
work. It was not easy but he kept at it and soon he had built a sturdy house of brick.” “Who ever told you that life is easy?” I ask my students. Yes, America is the land of freedom. But freedom isn’t free. You work hard, and you succeed, but you must keep at it. There’s no free lunch. As for independence; what stronger value is there in America than the value of individualism and independence, of going out into the world to make a life for yourself? This is not a value in the cultures of my students who come from Asia and Africa and the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Mexico, Central and South America.



This U.S. postage stamp features Judy Garland, Toto from the story The Wizard of Oz.

We Americans tell our children that the squeaky wheel gets the oil. My students learned that the nail that stands up gets hammered down first. In their cultures, they tell me, the family must *always* stay together. To break up the family, to strike out on your own, is anathema. And so, in their stories, the three little pigs, or goats, or rabbits, or camels, are living happily together when they decide to go against the values of the culture; to break apart the family and go off to live independently and alone. For that sin, they almost die. But in most folktales, there are always three chances. The first brother escapes the wolf and runs to the house of the second and the unity of two gives them strength. Finally reunited again, as the family unit of three, they are once again safe to withstand the wolf. They, and the child who hears the story, has learned the moral. Together you will survive, separate and independent you will die. And what of the wolf. “Who kills the wolf?” I ask. “The third little pig, ” they say. “Really? Do you think the wolf had the right to go down the pig’s chimney. Aren’t chimneys for fire? Who killed the wolf.” “Ah!” the light dawns. “The wolf killed himself”. Yes, in America we must accept the consequences of our own actions. To be truly free, we must accept full responsibility for our choices.

It’s been nine years since Humpty Dumpty showed me the way. From the *Three Little Pigs* I went to *Pinnocchio* for a discussion of truth which led to *George Washington and the Cherry Tree*, “Oh teacher, is that why McDonald’s has cherry pie on Presidents Day?” which led to *Abe Lincoln and the Change*, “Teacher there’s a used car dealer called Honest Abe’s’,” to *Chicken Little* and *John Henry* and the *Wizard of Oz*. “Ay, teacher, there really is no place like Home.”

Now I have three files filled to the brim with pasted and un-pasted clippings. My students have become addicted as well, and fill their own scrapbooks with found allusions.

Yes, I am living happily ever after using classic folktales and myths to teach my adult foreign students American English and culture. They are now happy members in the American language family. Try it. It’s magic.

APPENDIX A. NOTES ON ALLUSIONS IN THE TEXT OF THE ABOVE ARTICLE

Humpty Dumpty:

This very old English nursery rhyme, “to be measured in thousands of years,” was first printed in *Mother Gooses’s Melody* in 1803.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall;
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty together again.

The rhyme is also a riddle, and the answer to the riddle is that Humpty is an egg, so of course, he cannot be put together again.

The Three Little Pigs:

This French folktale is about three little pigs who set out into the world to make homes for themselves. The first builds a house of straw and the second a house of twigs. For their laziness, they are eaten by a hungry wolf who blows the houses down. The third pig works hard, builds a house of bricks, cleverly fools the wolf and lives happily ever after.

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz:

This story is about a young Kansas girl, Dorothy, and her dog Toto, who are blown by a cyclone over the rainbow and into the magical land of Oz. It is America’s most beloved fantasy. Written in 1900 by L. Frank

Baum, it was made into the first major Technicolor movie in 1939 by MGM. *The Wizard of Oz* has been viewed by more Americans than any other film.

George Washington and Abraham Lincoln:

George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are the two most beloved presidents in the United States. They are both famous for their truthfulness, and children are told illustrative stories of their honesty to this day: A few years after the death of Washington, Reverend Weems wrote that little George Washington chopped down his father's cherry tree and then admitted the deed to his father with "Father, I cannot tell a lie: I chopped down the cherry tree." When young Abe Lincoln was a clerk in a store, it is said that he gave a woman the wrong change and after work walked many miles in the snow to return the money. Oddly, these two stories of honesty, so trustingly believed by Americans are both fiction–they never truly happened.

APPENDIX B. EXAMPLES OF ALLUSIONS TO FOLKTALES

1. Commercial for Static Guard Hair Spray—shows Rapunzel in the tower and she can't comb her hair without it.
2. On May 26, 1998 in an episode of *Gilligan's Island*, they put on the play *Cinderella*. Mrs. Howell was Cinderella, and the Skipper was the ugly stepmother. Gilligan was the Fairy Godmother.
3. April 1, 1998 in an episode of *Family Matters*, Erkell calls Laura, *Laura Van Winkle* because she slept so much and missed the school bus.
4. On May 15, 1998, CBS weather news, Steve Rambo, said "What's up with these tornadoes: we're not in Kansas." And he later said "Dorothy, grab Toto and let's get out of here."
5. In a Dial Soap commercial, they used "Somewhere over the Rainbow" music and there was a dog that looked like Toto.
6. In a Bubble Yum Gum commercial, there was a duck with spiked feathers and an earring in his nose chewing Bubble Yum. He is no longer the Ugly Duckling but the envy of the others.
7. On a Charming Toilet Tissue Commercial, Humpty Dumpty falls off the wall but onto the Charming: he doesn't break because it is so soft.

From many books, there are often multiple allusions. Here are just two examples:

8. *Dead Men Do Tell Tales* by William R. Maples Ph.D., a non-fiction book about forensic anthropology:

> "By now the reader will perhaps share some of my frustration over these dismemberment cases. Over and over again I have acted the part of *all the king's men* in the old Mother Goose rhyme, trying to reassemble some poor *Humpty-Dumpty* of a murder victim who didn't fall off a wall, but who was most likely shot or stabbed to death, then laboriously sawed to pieces by his killer" (page 69).
>
> "From what I have seen, the impulse to evil is something deep within an individual from his very earliest years, if not from birth. At the center of the *labyrinth* of certain human personalities there lurks a *Minotaur* that feeds on human flesh and we have not yet found *the thread* to help us map this *maze* and slay the beast" (page 118).
>
> "The male rib from the fire belonged to Glyde Earl Meek, I did not fling up my arms and shout *Eureka* but I will confess to experiencing a keen, silent elation while gazing at this eloquent bit of bone" (page 181).
>
> "The officer loudly protested our findings. We had opened a *Pandora's box* of endless mischief" (page 202).

9. From *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa (1994) by Anchor Publishers, an autobiography about the author's childhood experiences as a first generation Japanese-Canadian during the Japanese internment in Canada during World War II:

> "[The brother, Stephen, has broken his leg and is in a cast] Stephen is scowling as Obasan returns and offers him a rice ball. "Not that kind of food," he says. Stephen, half in and half out of his shell, is *Humpty Dumpty* –cracked and surly and unable to move" (page 136).

"The ceiling is so low it reminds me of the house of the *seven dwarfs*...The room is crowded with the three adults, the suitcases, the boxes, Stephen and me" (page 143).

"In one of Stephen's books there is a story of a child with long golden ringlets called *Goldilocks* who comes to a quaint house in the woods lived in by a family of bears. Clearly we are that bear family in this strange house in the middle of the woods. I am Baby Bear whose chair Goldilocks breaks, whose porridge Goldilocks eats, whose bed Goldilocks sleep in. Or perhaps this is not true and I am really Goldilocks after all. No matter how I wish it, we do not go home" page 149).

"On the Friday following Uncle's return, Stephen must go to the hospital to have his cast removed. In the morning he is out in the back shed, pounding the ice off the runners of his homemade sled with the split log. *Humpty Dumpty*, I am thinking, will fall out of his shell and what will he be then?" (page 161).

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The Inner Voice:
A Critical Factor in L2 Learning

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Editor's Note: *Tomlinson's comments on the inner voice will very likely be interesting but perhaps unfamiliar to many readers. This author does not claim that the notion is his and his alone, but he does elaborate it in a quite thorough, thoughtful and coherent fashion. As set forth below with its extensive bibliography, the inner voice seems to have found a primary international advocate and spokesman.*

In the method he calls the Silent Way, Gattegno makes provision for beginning students "to watch, listen and notice instead of producing" utterances (Gattegno, 1972; Stevick, 1990). However, he also focuses from the beginning on accuracy in the public voice. Similarly, Asher (1977) in his Total Physical Response (TPR) advocates a long silent period in which students are asked to respond physically and not verbally to spoken instructions from the teacher. Neither Gattegno nor Asher, however, provide activities that aim at the development and use of the "inner voice," which also involves an initial silent period. By considering the implications of the existing literature and of experiments I have conducted, we can make a strong argument that such a voice is crucial in the learning of a second language. In this article, I will, first, briefly define the inner voice. Second, I will explore the relation between the inner voice and language learning. Third, I will suggest several general approaches to developing an inner voice in the second language. And fourth, I will recommend specific activities for the classroom and as homework.

I. Definitions and Examples

We use our inner voice to produce speech sounds in the mind when talking to ourselves or when repeating what we have heard or read. This phenomenon has been given many names by researchers and is commonly referred to as "inner speech" (e.g. Sokolov, 1972) or as silent speech (e.g. Edfelt, 1960). Klein (1982:1) gives a full account of the different labels given to the phenomenon of representing speech sounds in the mind. The inner voice is crucially different from the public voice, but it does use a variety of the same language. In this sense, it is different from the mentalese posited by some philophers as a universal mental code and from Gattegno's "melodic integrative schemata" which provide a "more primitive experience of language than the words in heard speech, and are perceived much earlier than the words" (Gattegno, 1972: 11). The inner voice uses a restricted linguistic code to interact with sensory images and with affect in order to achieve a multi-dimensional self-communication code. It relies to a great extent on such non-verbal features as intonation and stress, and its pronunciation is similar to that of intimate, colloquial conversation.

Examples of inner speech utterances are: "Not again!" "Poor guy." "Allright, nothing very unusual." "Why so much work?" "Why did I do that?" "What to do now?" "Weird. Doesn't make sense." These examples of inner speech are just a few of the many collected from an experiment I did at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Sixteen students who speak English as their first language were asked to write down anything they said with their inner voice, first of all whilst reading a number of poems and then during the course of a day. Obviously, such a corpus cannot be completely reliable, as once you write down inner speech utterances, they cease to be samples of inner speech. However, the utterances achieve suficient consistency with each other and with what other researchers report for them to be at least indicative of some of the characteristics of inner speech.

II. Inner Voice and Language Learning

Sokolov asserts that "external speech is functionally dependent on inner speech" (1972:65). Prior to speaking or writing to others we fix our thoughts in our minds "with the aid of inner speech, formulating a mental plan or a synopsis of some sort for our future statement. This takes on even more definite shape in writing when each contemplated phrase or even word to be written is preceded by its mental enunciation, followed by a selection of those most suitable" (65). In other words, the inner voice prepares for the public voice by formulating vague phrases, expanding upon them, trying out alternatives and monitoring draft expressions for accuracy, appropriacy and potential effect.

It is very difficult to use an inner voice when learning an L2 from formal instruction. When we learned our L1 we did so in what was primarily a private and personal way. We talked to ourselves before we talked to others and even when we talked out loud we were often using a private voice which was self-directed (Vygotsky, 1986). However when we learn an L2 in the classroom we are usually required to use a public voice from the very beginning. We are not normally given time to talk to ourselves but are required to participate in public interaction. Our L1 inner voice is inhibited by the need to produce L2 utterances which will be subject to public scrutiny. So, instead of developing thoughts and ideas in our heads before speaking them aloud we put all our mental energy into finding the right L2 words in the right form and the right order. We use the L1 inner voice for translating from L1 to L2 and for monitoring the correctness of our utterances in the L2 (see Swain, 1998 for an example of learners of French using their private English voices to monitor what they are producing in French). And in most cases we do not develop an L2 inner voice for a very long time, mainly because most of the activities we participate in as beginners demand instant responses and ask us to report our experience rather than to process it. Other reasons are that we are afraid to be "ungrammatical" in our heads in case this interferes with what we say aloud and because the de-contextualised triviality and blandness of much of the language we are required to process and produce does not encourage thought.

UNIVERSITY EXPERIMENTS

In experiments which I conducted at Kobe University and the University of Luton, I asked native speakers and L2 intermediate learners to read short texts (poems and extracts from novels) and then to reflect on their reading process. In all the experiments the native speakers reported speaking to themselves and seeing mental images but very few of the L2 learners reported either of these processes (Tomlinson 1996, 1997, 1998). A similar result was reported by Masuhara (1998) when she asked native speakers and L2 learners to think aloud as they were reading the beginning of a novel. The native speakers reported their inner speech and their sensory images whereas the L2 learners reported their attempts to decode and translate the words of the text. And if learners do develop an inner voice in the L2 and let it out as a private voice during classroom activities, they are monitored and corrected. For example, Frawley and Lantolf (1985) claim that what appears as erroneous L2 performance is often a reflection of the mental orientation of the speaker rather than a failure to use the L2 correctly. This is supported by McCafferty (1994b: 426) who reports an experiment in which a low-intermediate subject and an adult native speaker narrate a series of six pictures. The L2 learner uses private speech to label the components of each frame in order to make the task known whereas the native speaker achieves a coherent and cohesive narrative. Frawley (1992) also investigated the use of private speech by L2 learners during communication tasks and concluded that, "The elements that tend to be maintained in private speech concentrate the speaker's attention in uniquely positioning the speaker in relation to the task" (as in an example of a learner who just said "green" aloud to himself whilst doing a jigsaw puzzle with other members of a group).

Confronted with this use of private speech when learners are compelled to interact in English whilst performing a task, teachers often monitor (and even correct) it as though it was public speech and thus discourage the learners from using inner speech in case they "let it out." But without an effective inner voice we cannot produce meaningful public speech and without finding our own inner voice in the L2 we cannot achieve self-regulation (di Pietro, 1987). Also, if the development of an L2 inner voice is retarded and the use of the L1 inner voice inhibited by tasks requiring the focusing of processing energy on low level linguistic de-coding, then very little creative thought is possible and the learner is diminished. And, of course, if thinking is done in an attempted L2 public voice it will inevitably be conventional, superficial and very slow ("The process of external speech needs...much more time than does inner speech to express thoughts" (Sokolov, 1972)).

INNER VOICE AND ADVANCED L2 LEARNERS

It does seem though that advanced L2 learners make use of inner speech and private speech to help them to achieve mental representation. Appel and Lantolf (1994) report how advanced L2 English speakers trying to produce oral recalls of texts used private speech to try to understand as well as to recall the texts. de Guerro (1994) conducted a large-scale study of Puerto Rican college aged learners and concludes that inner speech plays a central role in rehearsing short term memory features (phonological, lexical and grammatical) so as to transfer to long term memory and that it helps L2 learners to gain confidence and lose anxiety about speaking the language as a result of internal rehearsal. Masuhara (1998) reports how advanced learners reported more inner speech and more visual images in their think aloud protocols of a reading activity than intermediate learners did. And in my experiments referred to above all the proficient L2 readers of English reported talking to themselves and visualising whilst reading. The big question is: "Do advanced learners only make use of their inner voice once they have become advanced or does their ability to use the inner voice help them to become advanced?" I am certainly convinced that the inability to develop an effective L2 inner voice prevents many learners from achieving meaningful communication in the L2 and therefore prevents them from ever becoming advanced.

Brian Tomlinson joins the class in listening to a student presentation.

A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE LANGUAGE LEARNING

Ushakova (1994) argues that the inner speech which we develop as children remains with us and provides a foundation by which all future language learning is supported. There is certainly evidence that in natural L2 language acquisition the learner first of all makes use of a silent period to develop an L2 inner voice. This inner voice is sometimes externally manifest as a whispered private voice which can be heard when the learner is listening to or reading the L2 in the presence of other people (just like the L1 child acquirer). Saville-Troike (1988) used wireless microphones to document the strategic learning functions in the private speech of L2 child learners during the prolonged silent period they went through prior to their willing production of public speech. She found that they used private speech to achieve repetition of other's utterances, creation of new forms, substitution and expansion of utterances, and rehearsal for overt social performance. I found similar uses of private speech amongst Indonesian beginner learners of English who were allowed a five week silent period during a large scale experiment in which some first year secondary school classes followed a TPR programme instead of doing the production drills featured in the textbook (Tomlinson, 1990). It does appear that allowing time for mental responses during L2 learning facilitates not only the ability to achieve meaningful mental representation but also the development of an inner voice which helps the learner to personalise the new language, to develop confidence in using it internally and ultimately to achieve fluency and effect in an external voice. But to achieve this in the classroom requires silence And many teachers are afraid of that.

III. Suggestions for Developing the Inner Voice

In L1 the inner voice develops naturally at the same time as (or possibly even before) the external voice. In L2 the external voice is given primacy from the very beginning, and it is imposed on and inhibits the inner voice, thus slowing down thought and retarding creativity. Instead of demanding public performance in the L2 from the very beginning, we should encourage learners to talk to themselves in private, egocentric speech. But even before that we should allow them the privacy and silence to develop an inner voice by providing them with opportunities to listen to the L2. They can respond mentally, physically or even in the L1; but they must be given time to think, and they must not be forced to perform in a public voice without having an inner voice available to help them to prepare.

LISTEN AND DON'T REPEAT

One way of helping learners to develop an L2 inner voice is to offer beginners an initial silent period of experiencing the language in use without having to focus on the correct features of the L1 public voice or to produce any utterances publicly. Then the learners can be given problem-solving tasks to do (in groups, in pairs, individually) and be encouraged to use a private voice to help them to articulate and solve the problems. The utterances they produce should not be monitored and must on no account be corrected. As McCafferty says (1994b: 199), private speech (provided it is not corrected) helps "students learn how to control anxiety about a task." Later in the course the learners can be asked to participate in tasks in which they use their private and/or inner voice to help them to prepare for production in their public voice. de Guerro (1994) says that L2 learners gain confidence and lose anxiety about speaking the language as a result of internal rehearsal.

Expose Students to Colloquial, Unplanned Speech

As Vygotsky (1956) says, inner speech is similar in many ways to colloquial speech. The L1 child learner is exposed to colloquial speech most of the time, but most L2 beginners are exposed only to planned and formal speech. It is very important therefore that L2 learners first experience the L2 in its colloquial, unplanned form so that they can acquire a variety of the language which can facilitate the development of an inner voice. Try talking to yourself in a voice which operates in a planned discourse mode with written grammar, cohesion and stylistic effects and you will see how difficult this is. This means that the teacher should chat to the learners naturally rather than delivering pre-planned sentences and that stories, descriptions, instructions etc. should be given informally and spontaneously rather than in the planned and often scripted form which characterises many beginners classrooms today.

Limit Use of Drills

Drills and controlled practice exercises by definition require instant and correct responses. They might have some value in developing a formulaic competence, but their overuse can prevent the development of inner and private voices in the L2 as they do not allow time for thought, do not offer any problems to think about, and they focus the learner's attention on correct forms of the public voice. Such exercises can be especially damaging if they present all their prompts in complete and overtly grammatical sentences and require learners to respond with such sentences too.

Avoid Premature Reading Activities

Also damaging to the development of an L2 inner voice are premature reading activities in which the learners is forced to focus all their processing energy on the low level linguistic de-coding of a short and empty text because they have not yet achieved the lexical threshold level which allows beginning L1 readers to respond to the meaning as well as to the words, and because the discrete item comprehension questions force a focus on the linguistic code of the public voice. Postponing reading until a substantial vocabulary has been acquired can facilitate the development of an L2 inner voice because the voice–which has been developing during meaningful listening activities and problem-solving tasks–can then be used to help achieve multi-dimensional representation of reading texts in which a lot of the language can be automatically processed. This is especially so if the reading activities involve mainly experiential rather than studial reading and if the teacher encourages intake responses (i.e. the learners' responses to their representation of the text) rather than imposes input response tasks (in which the learners are made to focus on what the writer says and how he/she says it).

Avoid Bland and Neutral ESL Readers

However, there is not much point in encouraging learners to respond to reading texts with their inner voice if there is nothing in the texts worth responding to. In a recent analysis I did of nine popular elementary level EFL coursebooks, I found that all the texts were short, explicit, neutral, bland and non-provocative in a way that the texts we read in the real world never are. There was no need for the reader to make sensory or affective connections nor to think about issues or implications with the inner voice. Low level linguistic de-coding was all that was necessary to comprehend the texts. Wajnryb (1996) also recently analysed popular EFL coursebooks and concluded that they portrayed a world which was "safe, clean harmonious, benevolent, undisturbed and PG-rated", which lacked "jeopardy, face threat, negotiation implicature (or implied meaning)" and in which meaning was "explicit and context-independent" (291). Wajnryb quite rightly calls for the introduction of much more "jeopardy" in the world of the EFL coursebook. She does so in order that we can prepare learners for the real world and can empower them to operate effectively in real communication. I would do so also so that we can encourage L2 learners to develop an inner voice to use in responding to texts which make them think.

ENCOURAGE L1 IN L2 CLASSES

Learner use of the L1 in the L2 classroom has been discouraged by most methodologists for a long time on the grounds that the more practice the learners get in using the L2 the better. This apparently logical advice, however, has led to situations in which lower level learners are extremely restricted because they do not yet have the language to develop and express ideas and opinions nor to project themselves as intelligent, creative human beings. All they can do is to imitate models, to de-code simplistic texts and to manipulate the decontextualised language of drills. Their representation of the L2 world is almost entirely linguistic and it lacks the multi-dimensional richness and variety of their L1 representation of the world. In some classrooms, learners who express themselves in the L1 are punished by teachers who have been told to insist on the L2 at all times. This narrow and negative experience of the L2 world diminishes many learners, demotivates them and prevents them from ever achieving communicative competence in the L2. However, many methodologists have begun to recognise the dangers of insisting on the exclusive use of the L2 and they are beginning to suggest greater tolerance of L1 use (e.g. Edge, 1993; Willis, 1996; Swain, 1998).

I would go much further and suggest that in some activities, the use of the L1 should be positively encouraged so that the learners can respond intelligently to what they read and listen to and so that they can generate interesting content before they speak or write. If they are encouraged to use their L1 in response and preparation activities they are likely to use their L1 inner voices too and thus to make the connections which will achieve the multi-dimensional representation necessary for meaningful processing and production of the L2. If they are forced to only use the L2 they will devote all their processing energy to producing correct L2 public speech and they will be unlikely to achieve meaningful representation at all. Of course, ultimately the learners need to develop an inner voice in the L2 so, in addition to L1 thinking and discussion activities, they need activities in which they are encouraged to think in an L2 inner voice. The aim is to make sure that the learners always use an inner voice and to help them to progress from exclusive use of an L1 inner voice, an L1 private voice and an L1 public voice to a stage in which they are able and willing to code mix between L1 and L2 in their inner, private and public voices and eventually, for some of them, to a stage in which they are proficient users of L2 inner, private and public voices.

IV. Specific Activities to Promote Inner Voice

In conclusion, I would like to suggest some activities which can be done in class or for homework to help learners to develop an inner L2 voice.

STAGE 1

1. Learners listen to dramatic readings of stories by the teacher (e.g. with gestures, sound effects and visuals) and then do L1 inner voice activities (e.g. "Talk to yourself about why you think the old man knocked on all the doors.") before taking part in L1 discussions of the story.
2. Learners take part in TPR activities (Asher 1977, 1994; Tomlinson, 1990, 1994) in which they are given time to think in their inner voices before they follow simple L2 instructions given to them by their teacher.
3. Learners take part in TPR Plus activities (Tomlinson, 1990, 1994) in which they act out stories, events, processes etc. narrated to them by their teacher and then try to recall what happened mentally before re-telling it in the L1.

STAGE 2

As for Stage 1, but the learners try to continue mentally the beginnings of L2 stories they have listened to, they report the TPR Plus activities in the L2 and the TPR instructions become more complicated. In addition:

1. They take part in what I call TMR (Total Mental Response) activities in which the teacher instructs them in the L2 to form mental images and to discuss issues and problems with their inner voices. Then they discuss their mental experiences with each other. The inner voice and the group discussions will be primarily in the L1 but the teacher can encourage the use of some L2 words.
2. The learners are encouraged to read along in their heads as the teacher reads emotive texts aloud.

Then there are intake response activities in which the learners think about and then discuss their responses to what they have "read".

3. The learners take part in problem solving activities in which they are encouraged to use their L2 private voices aloud individually, then in pairs and then in groups.

STAGE 3

As for Stage 2 but the learners take part in L2 group discussion and writing activities as follow-ups to their mental continuation of stories they have listened to and to the TMR activities they have participated in. In addition:

1. The learners do extensive reading activities in which they read texts of their choice. There are no tasks but the learners are encouraged to talk to themselves as they read and to do visual/verbal mental summaries and predictions at the end of sections of the text
2. The learners do experiential reading activities in which pre-reading connection activities, whilst-reading think activities and post-reading intake response activities are used to stimulate the use of the inner voice.
3. Learners in groups prepare to perform readings of extracts from texts which they have already read silently and enjoyed.

By doing such activities the learners can gain the confidence, the self-esteem and the communicative competence which can only come from effective use of the inner voice. Such activities are rarely advocated in TEFL methodology and are not used in coursebooks; but some inner voice activities are used in Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) and in Suggestopedia and examples of mental response activities can be found in Sion (1995), Underhill (1996) and Tuzi (1998).

Conclusion

We need to try to find out much more about why and how we use the inner voice in the L1 and about the differences between inner voice use in the L1 and in an L2. In particular we need to find out more about how an L2 inner voice develops (or does not develop) in both natural and formal L2 language acquisition, how teachers, learning materials and fellow learners typically influence this process and how L1 and L2 inner voices interact with each other. We also need to find out how we can help learners of an L2 to make use of their L1 inner voice in L2 learning and communication and how we can help them to develop an effective L2 inner voice. However, our current lack of verifiable knowledge about the L2 inner voice should not prevent us from experimenting with ways of trying to influence its development. Helping learners to talk to themselves during L2 learning and communication can certainly help them to reduce anxiety and to gain confidence and control. And there is a very good chance that it can contribute to increased communicative competence too.

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Dance: An Inspiration for Language in the ESL Classroom

Carolee F. Bongiorno was born and raised in New York City. She received her B.A. in English from St. Francis College in Brooklyn and her M.S. in Education, with a concentration in Learning to Read through the Arts, from Fordham University. Ms. Bongiorno has been a teacher of Language Arts, Art, and English as a Second Language in the New York Public School System for 24 years. A certified Art Therapist, she has trained at The Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts and is currently preparing for certification as a Dance Therapist.

An Interview with Carolee Bongiorno

> *"We look at dance to impart the sensation of the living in an affirmation of life, to energize the spectator into keener awareness of the vigor, the mystery, the humor, the variety, and the wonder of life."*
>
> Martha Graham[1]

JILL: So you're one of those teachers who waste our kids' time with song and dance and call it teaching English as a second language. What happened to good old nouns and verbs?

CAROLEE: I used to concentrate only on grammar, and almost all of my students would fail the state-mandated test at the end of the term. Now I use dance as one of the means of instruction, and the rate of students passing has skyrocketed. Twenty out of twenty in one class. Twenty-five out of thirty in another.

JILL: That's a phenomenal success rate. What's your secret?

CAROLEE: There's no secret involved. Just a commitment on my part and by my students.

JILL: High motivation? Is that it?

CAROLEE: Motivation is a part of it. A lot of things are parts of it. And it's not only dance. Depending on the attitude of the particular school, I also use painting and music and the arts in general.

JILL: I'm not sure we have time to talk about all of those.. Can you tell me mainly about dance in particular this afternoon?

CAROLEE: Certainly. What do you want to know?

JILL: Let's start off by your telling me how dance is related to your teaching English. For example, when do the children learn to use words, to make sentences?

CAROLEE: When they need to talk about the dance or do a written review of a performance or a commentary on a method or exercise. We do a lot of speaking and writing in my class...but we also do a lot of looking and listening and thinking...Let me say a few things, and then you can ask me anything you want...

JILL: Agreed.

CAROLEE: Dance is a living language, capable of expressing an infinite number of thoughts, hopes and possibilities. That's a..."high abstraction," especially for recently arrived immigrants. Would you agree?

JILL: Absolutely.

CAROLEE: It's abstract and it's high...and it's authentic, real. Those are real kids who show up in my ESL class. They've experienced a lot of difficulties. Many of them are right off the plane and are still having enormous problems with culture shock, strange food, a noisy city...My secret? Number One, I believe, is respect of the students and expressions of honest confidence that they can learn to do it. You talk directly to them and let them see a few of your rock-solid, high-principled convictions about dance and art.

You let them see that you really believe that dance is wonderful. You respect them, and at one point ask them to join in the dance. They do and they become excited. They want and need to share what they and their classmates have done. To speak and to write English become a central part of that communication. There are a great many variations, but essentially, that's it. It's simple and it's very complicated: simple to understand the basic idea; complicated to share deeply held beliefs.

JILL: Let's back up a bit. How did you get started? Were you walking along one day when a bolt of lightning hit, and it all came in a flash?

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[1] The quotations by Ms. Graham and Ms. Duncan were provided by Ms. Bongiorno.

[2] *In this interview, "JILL" is* The Journal of the Imagination in Language Learning and Teaching *represented by Clyde Coreil.*

CAROLEE: I have a lot of background in dance and the arts. My master's degree is in the use of art in education. I've had some wonderful teachers for which I am very grateful. It all helps, but it's still quite possible to learn my approach with as little as one day of training. Self-confidence, belief in the power of art, commitment, respect of your students–that's all you need. Then you explore and allow them to explore.
JILL: Tell me more.

Everybody Dances

CAROLEE: One of the reasons I began sharing dance activities with my students was to explore that uncharted interior territory where the spoken word is not easily found. It might sound ironic, but in my ESL classes, I use dance to transcend and break down barriers of language, which for my students are very real. Take 14-year-old Joel, for instance. He was shy and reluctant until I found out that he was a great Michael Jackson fan. Not only could he sing but the dance steps he had mastered were absolutely fabulous. Most of his classmates were from Asia and were spellbound by this young man. After his dance presentation, they all wrote rave reviews that meant a great deal to him. He has gone on to LaGuardia High, a performing-arts school, and from there he moved into a dance career. Not everyone is as good as he was, but everyone can learn about themselves through dance and the other arts. I made a discovery of my own. I discovered through my own exploration of dance that the markers I used as guideposts to reach beyond verbal communication were universal. We won't get into that, but believe me, it's an important part of my own commitment to the arts in education.
JILL: And that commitment includes language.
CAROLEE: Of course! My primary obligation to the students is to teach them English. But to reach this goal, I choose to go through dance and other forms of art. With dance, I want the students to move their bodies, minds and spirits, so they can dream and experience their potential in a way they were not yet capable of doing–given their shaky command of the English language. It will not, I tell them, be easy. Each of them has to find his or her own dance path–a way of dancing that is often unique and that comes from deep inside them. They have to step out of habitual roles and conventional scripts. Their reward will consist of release from the inertia of their sleeping abilities, to the joy of having the spirit of the moment.
JILL: That seems to have something to do with control…or am I missing the point?
CAROLEE: No. Control is very important. Dance brings the students together and gives them a center. It is a release and a means of having control. It connects the students to each other and the teacher to the student, since people of all ages enjoy dancing. When students' lives include dance–as well as art song, poetry and drama–they find a unity with those of other cultures. At the same time, students find their own rhythms, create the stories which they enact in dance, and act out their own visions. It is an open door to accepting themselves and awakening their confidence and spirit.
JILL: That seems a shade more interesting than nouns and verbs. But how do you know where to begin?
CAROLEE: The first task is to expose them to dance, to free the body, to experience the power of being. In my classes, I provide appropriate music for each rhythm and invite participants to explore their own expression. After modeling a free-form dance, I invite them to stand up and step forward, sometimes one-by-one, sometimes in a group. They begin to move and the air becomes electric, shattering their inertia. As their fear disappears, they forget that they can't dance. They and their dance become one. As inhibitions begin to fade, their spontaneous choreography astonishes me. It's fresh, bold and inventive. There is a freedom larger than the dance and one that directly extends to verbal and written communication [see Appendix]. Students discover their dance by doing it and then writing about it. There is no right way: only their way. All I hope to do is act as a catalyst. Our dance is about sharing feelings, memories and ideas.

Value of Dance to ESL Students

JILL: And this helps them outside the classroom, in their homes, for instance?
CAROLEE: Oh absolutely! As I said, these students are dealing with many difficult problems. In addition to learning a new language, they are living in a new culture. They do not necessarily share the same language with their classmates and are often ridiculed by other students because they are different and because they

don't have a thorough understanding of English. Additionally, these students are responsible for dealing with the day-to-day problems of life in America and often, with those of their parents who may not speak any English themselves.

JILL: It is these knitty-gritty problems I was referring to.

CAROLEE: Yes. In the face of these problems, it is very important that students express their thoughts and feelings, free from judgment, ridicule or failure. That is one valuable gift provided by dance. The normal shyness that would inhibit a student–boy or girl–from participating in a dance activity quickly fades in a nurturing environment of trust and acceptance where non-verbal communication is predominant. Dance fosters integrity and honesty with oneself and others. Students learn to trust their bodies and take pride in their accomplishments, to build the self-esteem and self-confidence that is necessary for developing an attitude of success in life. They can release feelings and pent-up emotions that may not have other outlets. They learn respect for innovation, brainstorming, and applications of new ideas.

Ms. Bongiorno, an accomplished and trained dancer, performs in a studio.

JILL: Are the students sometimes resistant?

CAROLEE: Sometimes, not often. Older boys are sometimes reluctant. When they are, I encourage them to use music they like and are familiar with, like Rock and Rap. When they feel more comfortable, then I talk about ballet and other forms of dance.

JILL: An inevitable question: do you think this has something to do with the different sides of the brain?

CAROLEE: Dance exercises stimulate visual thinking and perception, which are considered right brain processes. These are often ignored in traditional modes of instruction. This is critical for students whose learning or cognitive style is characteristicaly non-verbal. Regular practice in dance seems to encourage verbal (left brain) development through voluntary verbal sharing, fostering more proficient verbal expression.

The self-reflective nature of dance provides students with excellent tools for exploring their own personal values, preferences, desires and talents. The process of dance is an excellent way to record creative ideas and student development through the use of videotape and film. Such recordings help students focus their writing activities because they enhance observation and self-expression. For example, students can actually watch a videotape of themselves in a complex dance movement and discuss how effective they think they were in expressing the feelings they felt during their dance. It's powerful electricity, and parents react positively toward their children's excitement and expanding facility with English, both spoken and written.

JILL: I'm beginning to see how rich your technique is. I almost wish I didn't speak English and could enroll in one of your classes. But then I'm an adult. Does this approach work with adults? How could you ever break down the reserve?

CAROLEE: It works with any age group. I think that what is most effective and important is for the teacher not to be hesitant or in any way to suggest that he or she is not 100% committed to the idea that reserve is simply very much out of place. They pick up on that. That's why sometimes I simply begin the class by modeling dances for them. Having some training in dance is helpful to the teacher, but it's not necessary. Just making simple movements proves to be almost irresistible to the students who begin to do what you're doing.

Some movements are spontaneous, and others are taken from simple stories or fairy tales. Some students choose to write their own original fairy tales. Later we talk about what we have seen: the elements of dance and the symbolism that the dance communicates. We discuss how dance ia a part of all their cultures and how both men and women regularly participate in them. I also show films of various modes of dance, from Modern to Classical Ballet.

We begin to dance together in a circle or in other forms to get the students to relax, feel comfortable and to enjoy the process. I encourage individuals or groups to dance in any form they choose and to any music they wish to use. Students from various countries may do folk dances typical to their countries.

Group Dance Planning

JILL: Is there any other way you begin class?

CAROLEE: After the very first or second class, we begin with quiet time. Students are asked to close their eyes and be silent. Having them shut out external distractions and go inside themselves–that and setting a tranquil atmosphere is very conducive to doing creative, introspective work.

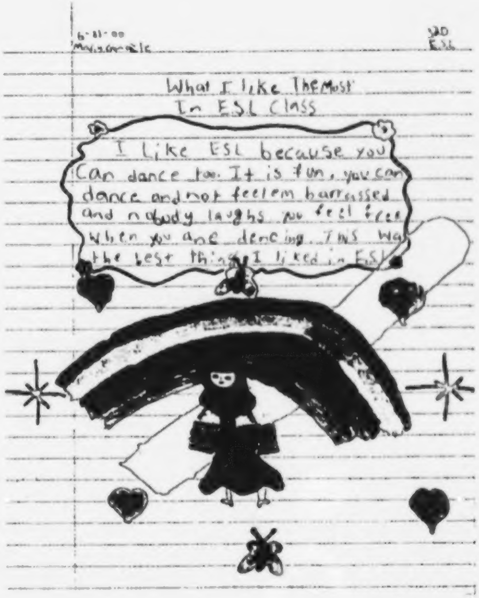
The procedure is never exactly the same. Sometimes, after we have been doing individual dancing for several meetings, we begin to plan group dances during a quiet gathering together in a circle. This gathering often occurs on a daily basis. If the students have been dancing at school or at home on their own, the teacher can provide time here for sharing anything they or the students like. They may share an actual physical exercise routine they have developed or their response to doing it. If there are any questions about anything discussed or about how to proceed, this is the time for the students to ask–while the group is still together and quiet. Students then choose groups with which to dance. These groups can be as small as two and as large as eight.

Student groups move to a quiet corner of the room and begin to plan their dance. They talk about their ideas, the movements they plan to use. They will demonstrate for each other. They practice. I give writing assignments at this point to focus their thinking and to get an idea of the particular dance as they are planning it.

I put out a variety of music for groups to choose to use in their dance creations. We read and discuss stories that they can act out in their dances. Costumes, scarves, face paint and other costume elements are put out for their use. Children love painting their faces for a ceremonial dance, and a simple scarf can be a vehicle to a spontaneous dance. Also available are drums, bells and other musical devices. Each group assigns their dance a name so that other students can refer to it. Some students will actually compose the music and words of songs based on fairy tales or poems to which we can dance. Often these are Rap songs.

JILL: So the writing and speaking are done in the service of a greater good.

CAROLEE: That's one way to put it. During the dance development stage, sharing among students takes place regularly. Pairs of students are assigned to alternatively speak to their partners for several minutes and then to listen to their partners. Students will write regularly in their journals of their feelings about the dance process, fellow students and their personal thoughts. I check to make certain that journals are being maintained, but I only read them when a student feels comfortable about my doing so. Sometimes a student will want to share or clarify something with the teacher privately. This can be done during the partner-sharing time.



What I like The Most
In ESL Class

I like ESL because you
Can dance too. It is fun, you can
dance and not feelem barrassed
and nobody laughs you feel free
when you are dencing. This wa
the best thing I liked in ESL

Students in Ms. Bongiorno's class express themselves in various art forms. The caption to this painting was: "I like ESL because you can dance too. It is fun. You can dance and not feel embarrassed and nobody laughs. You feel free when you are dancing. This was the best thing I liked in ESL."

Performances

JILL: Is there a "performance day' or something of the sort. I imagine there would be?

CAROLEE: Yes. After dances have been developed and practiced over several days, the groups return to the circle. Each group introduces its dance and then performs. Afterwards. each dancer talks about how he/she felt doing the dance. Children become very excited after a dance performance and are very receptive to answering questions and communicating with their fellow students.

The observers can now respond to the dance and ask questions of the dancers. At the end of each performance, the dancers are given a formal assignment–to write about their feelings in doing the dance and about their dance as a whole. The observers are asked to choose among the dances they've seen and to write a review.

School-wide performances can be arranged if the students feel confident enough, and trips are often taken to see performances of modern dance companies such as Alvin Ailey or Paul Taylor. These trips will generate writing assignments and discussions in class.

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JILL: The logistics of such trips must take a little planning.

CAROLEE: Yes indeed. All of these activities take planning, careful planning or they fall apart.

Conclusion

JILL: I'm afraid we'll have to end this conversation. Can you sum up and add a word for other teachers who might themselves be a little shy but would like to give your approach a try?

CAROLEE: Teaching ESL through dance is both effective and rewarding. Many foreign students have thrived in the openness of the dance classroom. Because the students are dealing with themes they enjoy such as music, movement and makeup, they begin to verbalize more, while enjoying their creativity. Their spontaneity in the classroom reduces their inhibitions and allows them the opportunity to learn language as their own choice—not simply because it's part of the curriculum. Students will regularly come to me for the meanings of words in the middle of class when they can't get them from their fellow students. Even writing exercises are more agreeable when they relate to a student's own feelings and thoughts about a dance they've performed or watched.

Including dance within the curriculum can be challenging, but I for one have found it to be well worth the effort. Any other teacher should be aware that it's possible to start very small—for example, the teacher can simply take one corner of a scarf and move and watch the graceful curves. And then ask for a volunteer to come up and take over. It can be as simple as that. The only other advice I would have is, one, never forget the great importance of communicating in English—or whatever language is being studied. And two, the teacher should never force the issue; that is, make students do something before they are ready. And you know when the moment has come because you can't keep them from doing it. Reaching that point is wonderful…for the teacher as well as the student.

> *"To dance is to live. What I want is a 'School of Life';*
> *for man's greatest riches are in his soul, in his imagination."*
> Isadora Duncan

APPENDIX

Following are unedited excerpts from the writing of Ms. Bongiorno's students of English as a second language. They were either reflecting on how they felt about being a dancer or responding to a particular dance called "The Eternal Light."

> *I enjoyed watching the dance and listening to the music; because when I saw Ms. Bongiorno dance to the music Eternal Light I then began to think that there could be hope and peace in this world. I liked the way the scarf was used to represent light, because a skaf is like a person with love and joy. If that person spreads his love and joy to other people, it will be like a chain reaction. When I saw the skaf with the rainbow colors, my heart was fulled up with joy.*
>
> *When I listened to the music carefully, I found out something very important. All the instruments that were used were different from one another. but the harmony they created, was beautiful and you wouldn't even know the difference. However, I think that if people would stop looking at the differences and start looking at what's the same, this earth would have been a better place.*
>
> Leila Manongi, 8th Grade,
> 2 Years in USA

> *First I felt very weird. I was surprised when my friend handed me the scarf, because I didn't think that I would dance in front of the whole class. It was easy to dance. I only had to move to the music with the scarf. I never danced this way with this kind of music. I think the scarf was beautiful.*
>
> David Kasik, 8th Grade,
> 18 months in USA

> [This dance] *has important meaning. When it is sunrise the light begin spreading all over the place. When it is sundown the light begin hiding, waiting for the next day to come. But we al-*

ways have to keep this light in our hearts, because light is an energy that never dies. If that energy dies, without it, we will die too.

I was really surprised when Mrs. Bongiorno gave us a chance to dance. In first thought, I was thinking what is she doing. In second, I figured out that she want us to know how it feels to be a dancer. Now I think that it's not easy to be a professional dancer, but everybody can dance the way they can. When I was dancing I had feeling of a little freedom that wanted me to be free from all my problems.

Sikorsyi Oleksii, 8th Grade,
9 Months in USA

I think a being a dancer is really good and refreshing, like in Friday morning I was not feeling well and was not in a good mood. I had plans that I'll go home after the lunch. Then later when I came in the class I heard guys saying that Miss Bongiorno was going a perform a dance and we also had to take part in it, and I was very excited. So later when we started to dance with the harmony of the music I really felt good and my mind was refreshed. So I think being a dancer is really cool.

Tenizng Dhargyal, 8th Grade,
1 Year in USA

When Anh gave me the scarf to dance, I had all these plans of what I'd do when I'm dancing. But when I stood in the center holding the scarf, I suddenly got really scared. I forgot all my plans, and I didn't know what to do with the magic scarf. So I just twisted around and let the scarf fly in the air, hoping that it would look as if I was spreading the light, which I meant to do in the first place. I tried to make the scarf touch everyone in order to give them each part of my light. Then I saw all the faces looking at me, and some were laughing. I got so scared that I started laughing and couldn't stop. This happens to me sometimes when I was presenting a project, but I didn't expect it to happen when I danced (it never happened to me when I was acting). Especially when the camera flashed and caught me by surprise, I couldn't look anymore. I guess I didn't want to be in the center of attention (except in the play because I love to act). I'm sorry that I do not have the courage and talent that Ms. Bongiorno has. I prefer acting and writing than dancing. But the dance was very wonderful though. I love to watch it, not do it. I hope everyone forgives me for not doing it as good as you expected.

Mai Hoang, 7th Grade,
2 Years in USA

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Reader's Theatre: An Introduction to Classroom Performance

Gerald Lee Ratliff, who holds the Ph.D. in dramatic literature from Bowling Green State University (Ohio), is currently serving as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at the State University of New York, College at Potsdam. He is author of numerous textbooks on performance studies and was a Fulbright Scholar to China in 1993.

Gerald Lee Ratliff

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Although the following article is primarily addressed to native speakers of English, the techniques described are eminently suitable for the teaching of second and foreign languages. It represents one of many types of projects that are simultaneously language-centered and contextualized so that intense exposure to the target language is maximized. Unfortunately, some aspects of current language-teaching theory seems to hold that "language" and "projects" are inherently different categories.*

> *My characters are assembled from past and present stages of civilization...bits from books and even newspapers; scraps of humanity, ragged and tattered pieces patched together as is the human soul.*
>
> August Strindberg, *Diary*

The lights dimmed, and the murmur in the classroom hushed as the student-actors filed in, led by the narrator. All carrying books, they took their places on high stools arranged in a row in front of the blackboard. They were wearing one or two pieces of the costumes by which the character each was playing would be recognized. The narrator remained seated as he opened his book and started reading in a rather strong, even intense tone of voice. The story was "The Chrysanthemums" by John Steinbeck. The student's eyes often left the book to find the audience. When the character Elisa spoke in the story, the student playing that character delivered the words. Although her voice was animated, she did not stand up but remained on her stool. She did not look at the student playing her husband with whom she was speaking. Other actors read the lines and sometimes the thoughts of characters as they appeared on the page.

Although slight variations are often made, this type of presentation—called "Reader's Theatre"—has been increasing in popularity for the past fifty years. It is a cross between silent, solitary reading and the fully staged productions with which we are all familiar. One basic difference is that Reader's Theatre usually uses short stories, whereas regular theatre uses long or short plays. The text can be in the students' first language or in one being studied at the time. The versatility and simplicity of this type of activity is one of its greatest advantages. For example, articles from newspapers and magazines can very easily be presented in this medium.

Dramatizing Literature

One of the primary principles of Reader's Theatre, however, is to "dramatize" literature in classroom performance and to provide a visual and oral stimulus to students who are unaccustomed to using imagination to appreciate literary texts. This "theatrical mind" approach to the interpretation and subsequent performance of literary texts relies on the basic viewpoint that to *see* literature is as relevant to giving life and meaning as to *read* literature. There are a number of ways to use Reader's Theatre in literature or the language classroom. It may be used to enhance the critical study of language; to explore the author's meaning or point of view; to promote reading, writing and listening skills; and to display creative talents of student performers. For the most part, however, today's Readers Theatre is concerned with the inherent theatricality of literature—particularly the role that sights, sounds and words can play in the interpretation of a literary text.

Selected Conventions

Although Reader's Theatre is part of traditional theatre movements that seek to "stage" the actions, attitudes and emotions of literary characters as described by an author, there are selected conventions that clearly distinguish it from more typical theatre classroom activities. For example, in Reader's Theatre, a student's vocal response and physical action are directed forward, full-front, to help that student and the audience visualize what is being described in the literature. In addition, a single performer may play a variety of roles or serve as a narrator figure who provides narration and transition for the scripted literature. Performers may either hold their scripts or place them on reading stands. They may stand in line facing the audience or sit on stools or chairs; and there may be combination of sitting and standing. Performers, who usually remain in the classroom playing space throughout the presentation, may have individual lines of dialogue or they may share lines with other performers. They may also wear suggestive costumes and make-up, or they may wear their own clothing.

The Stage

The classroom staging of literature in Reader's Theatre may include a traditional elevated stage, or the playing space may be arranged in-the-round, in which case the audience sits on all sides of a central space that is the stage. Or the audience can sit in a semicircle or on three sides of the performers. Classrom staging may even include accessories like ramps, platforms or a backdrop depicting a painted setting. Other optional accessories can include lighting, sound, recorded music, choreographed movement, or slides and projections. There is an increasing trend in Reader's Theatre to stage literature in "found" spaces. In such a presentation, the literary text is moved to an actual locale that suggests the setting described by the author. For example, Edwin Markham's "The Man with the Hoe" is staged in an abandoned field or Wallace Stevens' "Peter Quince at the Clavier" is staged in a music recital hall.

Performance Blueprint

The range of literature available in Readers' Theatre is limited only by the imagination needed to give novels, magazine articles, poems, short stories, song lyrics, letters or personal diaries a classroom performance. An essential ingredient in developing the "blueprint" or master plan of presentation is for student performers to read with a critical eye to grasping the subtle suggestions of character implied in the story line. Student performers should read any literary text chosen for presentation as they read novels or short stories–initially sorting out narrative descriptions or character relationships and allowing the "story" to tell itself in character actions or movements. If possible, the literary text should be read in one sitting to sense the momentum and inevitable build to a climax suggested in the arrangement of episodes. Particular attention should also be paid to the author's description of scenic elements that might help the audience visualize the locale.

A second reading of the literary text should be more analytical than the first, and focus on clarity and comprehension. Student performers should critically evaluate a character's interaction with others and consider the onlooker's response to him or her. The more objective second reading should also be enriched with active classroom discussion and written portrait sketches that fill in the author's incomplete character outline with inventive self-expression. It may also be useful for student performers to cultivate a *mental symbol* that helps to clearly define a character. A mental symbol indicates (1) the character's ultimate desire and (2) what actions the character is willing to pay in pursuing that desire. In isolating a character's primary motivation, it is important to assign a specific "name" to the desire. Naming a character's desire encourages an illustrative approach to classroom performance, and student performers are better able to be active role-players armed with a stronger sense of a character's intellectual and emotional point of view.

A Meaningful Approach to Interpretation

The need for creativity in the teaching of literature has traditionally been seen in terms of instructional approaches that seek to "read aloud" literary works of merit in small groups or to engage in critical analysis through written essay assignments. These standard approaches to the study of literature, however, frequently fail to consider the potential for a Reader's Theatre classroom performance as a meaningful approach to interpretation of the literary text. One of the primary principles of Reader's Theatre is that performers must be trained to visualize and to vocalize character actions and thoughts being described in the literature. Fictitious character development, of course, does not immediately leap from the printed page full-blown in its performance suggestion. Rather, characterization emerges in subtle and frequently disguised clues that often point the way to a particularly striking interpretation of both character and literature.

Student Discussion and Writing

Performers should critically evaluate the primary scenes of a character's interaction with others and anticipate potential performance reactions and responses. Performers should also re-think any initial interpretation of the character gained in the first reading; and then isolate and identify those specific character actions, dialogue or movements that might help to reinforce or refine the preliminary interpretation. The more objective second reading of the literary text should also be enriched with active classroom discussion and written character sketches so that initial, perhaps preconceived, notions of role-playing can be evaluated in terms of the given circumstances provided by the author.

Student performer explores body movement in classroom performance of John Atwater's short story "Westward Ho!"

Conclusion

By voicing the subtle nuances of meaning suggested in the literary text, student performers begin to cultivate an appreciation as well as an understanding of changing character attitudes or moods. Such voicing is based on the principle that literary texts should be read with a critical eye to grasping the creative suggestions that are implied in the dialogue and narrative, and then translating them into specific actions and movements. Particular attention should also be paid to the author's description of the setting and the scenic elements of design; as well as to other theatrical production elements like potential lighting, sound or props that might help to visualize the episodes described in the literary text. The more knowledge that student performers have about the construction of the text, the more informed and perceptive will be the subsequent interpretation of the action, dialogue and character in classroom performance.

APPENDIX: *CLASSROOM EXERCISES*

The following exercises, developed in introduction to literature classes for non-majors, should provide an excellent foundation to support further creative exploration. Each instructor should approach the exercises in a manner that is compatible with an individual style of presentation; and each instructor is encouraged to take the liberty of adapting, modifying or extending the basic techniques suggested to meet individual assignments. The exercises are framed as participatory activities to stimulate awareness of basic Reader's Theatre principles and are intended to promote an atmosphere of relaxed inquiry and risk-free role-playing.

Exercise 1: "Vocal" Special Effects

Objective: To explore the properties of sound and the role that "vocal" special effects might play in the classroom interpretation of a literary text.

Approach: Stockpile a variety of hand-held items capable of conducting the sounds of the human voice. Examples might include cardboard tubes, garden hoses, soda cans, plastic jugs, mouth mufflers, combs, vacuum cleaner attachments, scuba masks and glass containers. Begin the exercise by having the performers present their found objects individually to the class. Each performer uses the found object as a mouth-piece to produce an interesting sound. Present each performer with a familiar line of verse, prose phrase or witty quotation to voice with the found object. Sources might include *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, book titles, song lyrics, television programs or well-known quotations from the *Bible*, William Shakespeare, Abraham Lincoln or Benjamin Franklin. For example, the familiar line of verse may be William Shakespeare's "Come what may come. Time and the hour runs through the roughest day." *(Macbeth*, I, iii); the prose phase may be Mark Twain's humorous suggestion that "…familiarity breeds contempt and children"; or the witty quotation may be Oscar Wilde's observation that "I can resist everything except temptation." *(Lady Windemere's Fan*, I, i.)

After the performers have been given individual opportunities to demonstrate a found object and to voice a familiar line of verse, prose phrase or witty quotation, repeat the exercise *without* the found object. Each performer is now encouraged to duplicate the sound produced by the found object with a very natural voice; and to create as many "vocal" special effects as possible. Following individual presentations, there should be active discussion and evaluation of the role that sound might play in voicing the attitude and mood of individual literary characters.

Extension: The exercise may be extended as a small group project that focuses on voicing special effects in literary texts that contain descriptive character actions and long narrative passages as well. Examples of literary texts appropriate for this part of the exercise may include Albert Camus' *The Stranger*, Antoine de Saint

Exupery's *The Little Prince*, Ronald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach* or Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Exercise 2: The Body Shop

Objective: To promote performer awareness of fluid, expressive body movement in classroom performance.

Approach: Working in ensemble groups of six or eight, begin with a series of relaxing warm-up exercises. Performers bend from the waist, trying to touch their toes and then relax the arms in front of the feet. Slowly, performers swing both the head and the arms in a pendulum-like motion that resembles limp noodles in a pot of boiling water. The swinging motion continues with the legs and chest cavity until performers collapse in a soggy heap in the middle of the playing space. In the second part of the exercise, the performers lie flat on their back and slightly elevate the knees, while keeping the feet flat on the floor. The pelvis should be tilted toward the knees, and the arms relaxed at the side flat on the floor. Performers inhale deeply for a count of thirty-five, then exhale slowly for a count of thirty-five.

When completely relaxed, performers *purr* like a playful kitten and sustain the sound produced for a count of thirty-five. Keeping the pelvis tilted toward the knees, performers continue to inhale deeply and then exhale slowly for a count of thirty-five as they *growl* like a dog, *hum* like a song bird, *snort* like a horse, *buzz* like a bee, *whimper* like an infant, *hiss* like a snake, *hoot* like an owl and *crow* like a rooster. Finally, the relaxed performers stand and respond as an ensemble to the following movement patterns. First, move like the witches casting an evil spell in Ben Jonson's short poem "Witches' Chasm." Second, move like infantrymen approaching an enemy outpost in Norman Mailer's novel *The Armies of the Night*. Third, move like the lost travelers in Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem "The Snow Storm." Fourth, move like the aged professor delivering a tedious lecture in Eugene Ionesco's short playscript *The Lesson*. Fifth, move like the clowns and jugglers suggested in Thomas Wolfe's short story "Circus at Dawn."

Extension: The exercise may be extended to include taped music that promotes spontaneous movement patterns as well. If taped music is used, allow one-minute between each musical selection. There are also performance opportunities in the extended part of the exercise to distribute excerpts of literature like Alberto Rios' "Wet Camp," William Sydney Porter's (O. Henry) "The Gift of the Magi," William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* or Stephen Crane's "In the Desert" that lend themselves to small-group choreographed movement patterns.

Exercise 3: You Are There

Objective: To acquaint performers with the role of historical research in role-playing.

Approach: Divide performers into small-groups of five, and distribute a brief poetry or prose selection that suggests a specific historical period. Performers are instructed to search outside the literature to learn about predominant attitudes, social mores, daily habits and dress of the selected period. The historical research should focus on examples of customs or manners that reflect another time and another place. The studies should also complement an analysis of the historical description found in the selected literature. In a study of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, for example, performers may focus on the daily routine of a feudal estate, appropriate choice of clothes to suggest a character's social status, or experiment with voicing unfamiliar phrases like "smale foweles" or "uo roos the sonne." The second part of the exercise is classroom performance of the literature that includes historical research in role-playing. Performers should integrate daily routines, dress or habits, mannerisms and historical traits that capture the spirit of the times. There should also be some attention paid to the use of historical props, set pieces or small scenic units to suggest the historical period.

Extension: The exercise may be extended to include interdisciplinary approaches to historical research as well. For example, alliances with art, music, social studies or history can result in "You Are There" projects that recreate selected historical periods in classroom performance. Participants may contribute authentic music, scenic art, case studies, informative handouts and inventive staging to complement the collaborative project.

There are a number of literary texts that lend themselves to interdisciplinary projects. The epic narratives of Jonathan swift's *Gulliver's Travels* or James Joyce's *Ulysses* are familiar historical travelogues; and there are popular Arthurian legends like Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" or Mark Twain's satirical *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* that are very appealing to student performers. Some other literary texts that feature historical customs and manners ripe for classroom performance include Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and George Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion*. There are also good adventure narratives like Daniel DeFoe's *Moll Flanders*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Herman Melville's *Billy Budd* that are likely prospects for collaborative classroom performance and interdisciplinary study.

Exercise 4: Three Characters in Search of an Alien Author

Objective: To acquaint performers with the role that critical analysis plays in classroom performance.

Using found objects, students voice a series of sound effects to punctuate a classroom performance of T.S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men."

Approach: Begin the exercise with a critical analysis of a brief excerpt of a selected literary text featuring four characters. The analysis should be sufficiently detailed to indicate character relationships and the author's apparent point of view or theme. The literary text should also be cut or edited to a fifteen minute classroom performance.In the first part of the exercise, place several chairs, tables or desks in different areas of the classroom playing space. Prepare four written slips of paper that read "author" and the individual names of each "character" named in the selected literature. Each performer draws a folded slip of paper, moves to a table, desk or chair and sits. No performer is permitted to know the identity of any other performers at this time. Performers may move to different locations and join other characters as the exercise moves forward.

Ask a member of the audience to choose an exciting event or incident in the literary text that may stimulate the initial discussion. Each performer then responds to the question in the "voice" of the author and characters without revealing their identity. The object of the exercise is to rely solely on the literary text, and to direct responses to the implicit or explicit evidence found in the literature. Any apparent disagreements in interpretation should be resolved with reference to a character's action, dialogue or narration.

There may also be an impartial moderator or "narrator figure," who solicits questions from the audience to clarify the performer's interpretation of the literary text. Questions may be directed to a character's intention or motivation, author's point of view, theme, imagery or choice of locale. Questions may also directed to staging or movement patterns suggested in the literary text. It is important in the question part of the exercise that performers recognize each other's identity without any acknowledgement to the audience. It is also important that performers respond to questions within the context of what a critical analysis of the literature suggests. The first part of the exercise ends when the moderator determines that a majority of the audience clearly identifies the "author" and the "characters."

Extension: Extend the exercise with other performers in small-groups assigned different literary texts for analysis and audience questions. You may also use the responses to audience questions as an improvisation to flesh-out character relationships or to stage a classroom performance.

Some good examples of literature that lends itself to analysis, audience questions and improvisational classroom performance in a limited time frame may include the "young King Arthur's education" excerpt in T.H. White's *The Sword in the Stone*, the "tea party" episode in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and the "insurance money quarrel" scene in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (II, I).

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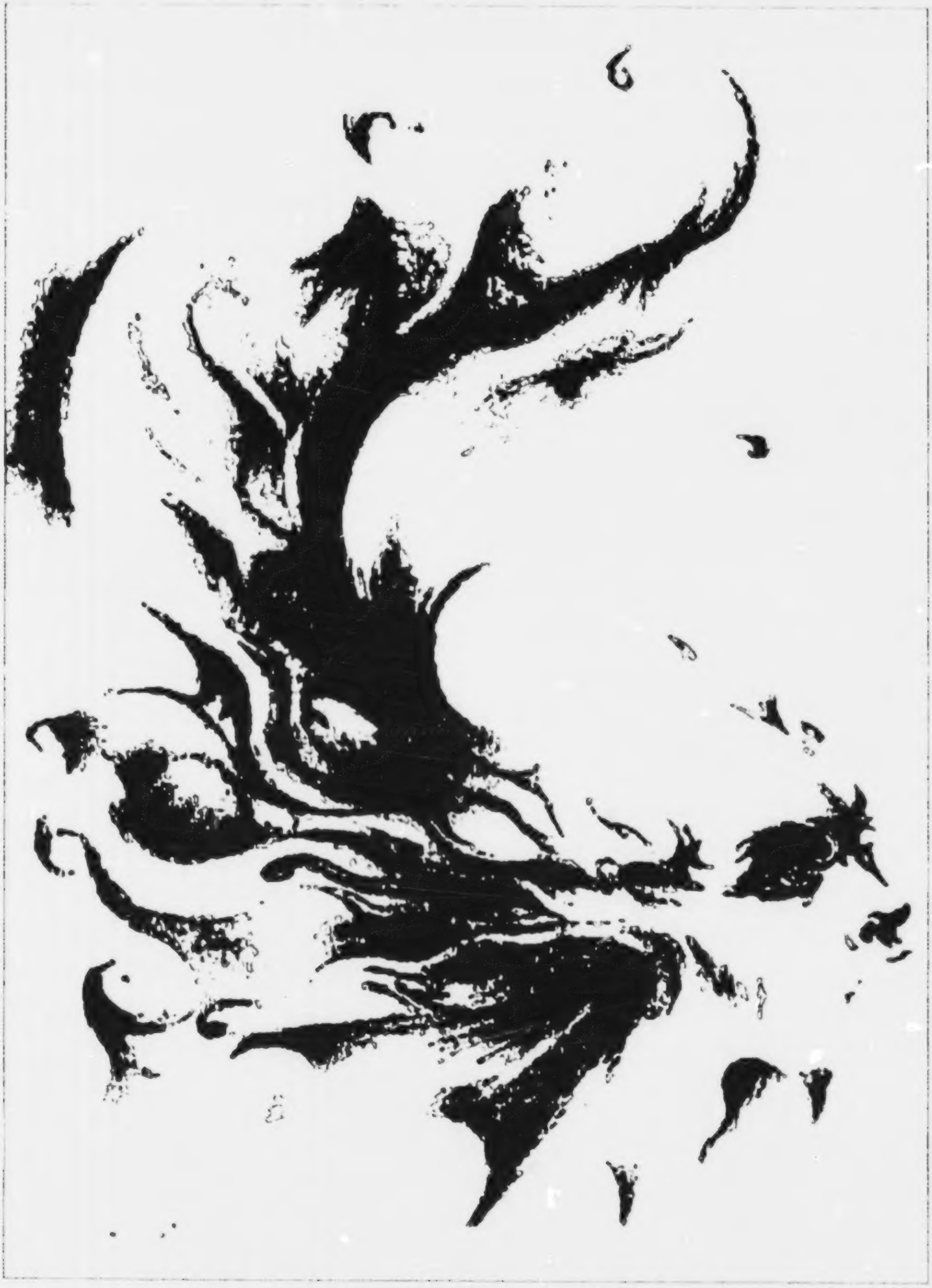

Novels and Films in the Elementary School Foreign Language Class

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> *For a story to truly hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination; help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggest solutions to the problems which perturb him.*
>
> Bruno Bettleheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*

In exposure to literature and films, there seems to be an unfortunate double standard for elementary students studying their native language and those studying a foreign language. In their own language, children are exposed to stories and texts that are above their production level in writing and/or speaking. This is very welcome: real language that is relevant and meaningful sparks interest, imagination and creative language use. Indeed, literature and film have been used in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) with adults and secondary school learners (Snow, Met, Genesee, 1989). Yet it is assumed that for younger children, overly simple and entertaining storybooks in the foreign language are all that is needed. In this paper, we maintain that exploring themes and skills that are relevant to the child's world might well lead to a richer and more productive experience in the foreign language. This experience would be closer to the language development required in the mainstream classroom. More specifically, we will develop the idea that interweaving film and literature can contribute significantly to a far more dynamic classroom, especially if the actual story corresponds to the age level of the child. Such activities could avoid fragmenting the foreign language into component parts, which often characterizes contemporary methods.

Living a Fascinating, Fictional Tale

A children's novel—a modern, provocative fairytale by a popular British writer—plus the American film adaptation provided stimulating course content for young learners. Motivationally, French children were very excited about reading a book and watching a film—all in English. The material stimulated their creativity, leading to a real involvement with the text and projecting well beyond the written word. It was as if their imagination took over and they were truly living a fascinating, fictional tale. Language learning became secondary. The children were eager to share their feelings, ideas and fears; to speak out and about the content of the material. They naturally communicated energy, curiosity and involvement with the material: in fact, this excitement was somewhat difficult to control at times.

The children also seemed to learn from absorption and imitation, being immersed in rich input, but not by simply mimicking what they heard. The teachers found that after each class, the literature and film naturally generated more ideas for language use and new themes to explore. The novel and film adaptation, in their entirety, were used with children between the ages of eight and twelve years. They were doing things "with language not to language" (Rigg, 1991). This article explores a task-based approach and an integrated focus, drawing on and developing all language skills. In the following paragraphs, we will explore activities interweaving themes, meaning and imagination.

The Context

The European Community has given priority to foreign languages in education, leading to multicultural exchange and communication. France requires foreign language learning in primary school. Children begin English at an early age, finding it full of fun, songs and games. When they reach middle school, the process changes to sentence-level, structure-oriented oral/aural methods. We did something different in our study. In taking the same approach as with adults—using film and literature as content for language classes—we attempted to answer several questions:

- How might young learners remain active in the language-learning process beyond the use of songs, games and simple structures?
- How can we draw upon their developing literacy skills in their own language?
- How might they be motivated for the reading and writing of the assortment of texts and varieties of English they would encounter in secondary school and beyond?
- How could the EFL experience move beyond the word and sentence level with a meaning-based whole approach?
- How might the children make a better transition from a play-centered approach to a gradually more conscious and cognitive learning through a content-based approach to skills?
- How might we give EFL learners at a young age the desire and skills to read with pleasure in a foreign language?
- European children receive a substantial grounding in the structure of their own language. How might we transfer this linguistic background knowledge early on to the learning of a second language?

The project we will describe was used with French children in an international school in Paris who had a special "Wednesday English" immersion class. Once a week, they had a whole day in English, based on a variety of subjects, including language instruction. The second group was German children, living temporarily in Holland and attending an international school. They had 45 minutes of English language instruction, Monday through Friday, during the entire academic year. The material was also used in a one-to-one instructional setting with a child exposed to spoken English at home in France. This child was somewhat dissatisfied with being in the English class at public school with his classmates who were just beginning English.

All the children were between the ages of eight to eleven years old. Most of them were in the second-to-last year of primary school before moving into the middle school. The children's reactions to the material in each of the different European communities also provided interesting and somewhat unexpected cultural perspectives, which we will look at. The author was asked to work with the primary school EFL teachers who were eager to develop various ways of using video in the classroom and to use more extended and "real" language with the children. As the project evolved, the language teachers also became increasingly interested in using the material across the curriculum. The film and literature were used for almost four months as instructional material in the English classroom.

Why a Fairytale?

Themes of growing up, societal roles, malevolent beings and cunning strategies are relevant to young learners. Fairytales address the deep human problems in an imaginative form, helping children to find meaning and security in life by approaching their personal problems through clearly defined characters representing good and evil. Fairytales have a rare and unequalled value for children while they are growing up. These stories offer (1) new dimensions to a child's imagination and (2) original solutions to essential human problems. Children may become personally involved in the story, identifying with the characters, interpreting illustrations and clarifying the narrative in their own manner. Such imaginative flights of fantasy guide children to expand their own creative powers.

Popular stories and their film adaptations allow children to be in contact with longer stretches of language in context. Fairytales are a narrative genre which the children are familiar and comfortable with in any language. The narrative structure also guides their ability to understand. Extensive reading becomes a rich source for language skills development. In addition, the children often ingeniously translate their reactions into original colorful drawings or personalized versions of the deeds of the hero or the heroine. Even older children use images to make sense and articulate their visions and lives.

No Fear of Constructing Meaning in L2

In their first language, children enjoy reading and listening to fairytales and stories, which are a part of their everyday lives. They provide extremely rich content, as well as language input. In this project, the children were similarly immersed and surrounded by the book and film of *The Witches* for several months. Such material is often categorized as too difficult or inaccessible in the foreign language classroom, especially for young learners. In this case the children's spontaneous responses and reactions to the material reveal how much they had really understood and processed. At the beginning of the project, the teachers were very surprised at how much the children actually did understand. Suddenly, they felt their learners had a lot of vocabulary and were interested in how to activate the passive reserve of knowledge. The children were also willing to construct meaning, their meaning, with no fear of their limited English proficiency. Even more rapidly than adult learners, they took words, phrases and expressions directly from the novel or film and used them. The children were guided through simple tasks to understand a complex story in language well above their spoken command.

A student gets thoroughly into a foreign-language novel by putting together the costume of a traditional witch riding a broomstick.

Children are also sophisticated consumers of visual media, responding to special effects, music, camera movement and images relevant to their age. The same story with slightly different perspectives or twists in the film version impressed the children and recycled many of the major themes. The children often made remarks on the quality of the film techniques and special effects. This was very important in engaging the children in attentive listening and viewing. They liked how realistic all the imaginative scenes appeared. They were able to discern rapidly how they had been "manipulated" by the media, but they loved this game. Thus, a judiciously selected story and its film version give young learners an attractive media for listening, interacting, reacting and responding in English.

A Storytelling Approach to Literature and Film

Storytelling plays an important role in children's lives. Approaching the novel and film as one story to be told, shared and experienced over and over made the language learning experience much more collaborative. The children gradually reconstructed the general meaning and ideas along with their own feelings and existing knowledge. The teachers told or read the story dramatically, used the illustrations, played the story on tape and on film. The children took a much less analytic approach to text at this age. They used it to expand their imaginative and creative powers and play with the fun sound of words. The key element was the learners' reactions and responses as they were encouraged to participate out loud, ask questions, interrupt, clarify, give their interpretation to make this a storytelling event. The participants were inspired to get actively and creatively involved in retelling, remembering, predicting a memorable and meaningful context. The story was broken into sections, chapters or scenes where the children developed their predictive skills and inferencing strategies. The audiotape listening also provided the children with mood, cues and clues, through music and sound effects.

One teacher began by telling and then reading the children various well-known fairytales. She created a very comfortable story-corner in her room and filled the classroom with pictures and drawings, encouraging the children to visualize their understanding. She also moved closer to the type of fairytale the children would be reading by using modern versions or fractured tales with sound effects and modern outcomes. The children were particularly sensitive to the illustrations and sound effects of the more modern versions. They felt them to be more relevant to their age as they approached adolescence. Another teacher brought out familiar animals she had used with the children previously. They became actors or characters in this story. The lessons became a group experience for the children. The goal was a general understanding of the basic action, plot and themes—not an introduction or practice of grammar items.

The Witches *by Roald Dahl*

The Witches was selected as well-written imaginary literature. The full length feature film adaptation includes refined film techniques and special effects by Jim Henson Productions (associated with the television show *The Muppets*). The sophisticated effects were especially appreciated by children of this age group. Dahl loves to provoke, in joyous, mocking cruelty, using the imaginary as a response to the real world, much like in traditional fairytales. The opening statement challenges: "A REAL WITCH is easily the most dangerous of all the living creatures on earth." How can a child tell when he or she is face-to-face with a real witch and what must he or she do?

The Witches begins with "A Note about Witches": "In fairytales, witches always wear silly black hats and black cloaks, and they ride on broomsticks. But this is not a fairytale. This is about REAL WITCHES." The story that then unfolds follows every convention of a classical fairytale from narrative structure to the roles and deeds of the principle characters. The children seemed to thrive on this central contradiction between what is real and imaginary. They often asked questions, for clarification or made pertinent comments trying to resolve what is imaginary and what is real. Such an engagement with the text reveals the true magic of Dahl's novel.

The Novel and its Characters

The hero, Luke, and his greedy counterpart, Bruno, are the same age as the learners. Mr. Bean, a well-known British comedy character, also played a decisive role in the film. The children were excited to see his familiar face. Angelica Huston frequently plays the role of a witch and was well-known to the learners. Here the Grand High Witch has plans to get rid of all children in England. Other characters include mice, which are popular in fairy tales and children's stories. They, too, are often associated with witches. When Luke is turned into a mouse, he becomes even more intelligent, wise and brave; definitely the fairytale hero fighting evil with good. The film ends differently from the novel. The children predicted possible endings, not caring much for the typical Hollywood ending after reading the novel. Their main concern was that the boy be happy as a mouse. The film was used alongside the novel, simplifying the story line, leaving out certain events without spoiling the overall effect . In addition, the film softens certain deeper fairy-tale themes in the novel, such as death or anxiety, creating a quick pace with a positive resolution.

The young learners were encouraged to be active while watching the film, not silent, passive participants. They instinctively referred to the images to construct meaning. Using images to make sense of the world and of their lives was natural to the children. They watched the film rather than trying to listen to it (as adults). The children accepted the gist from the visual input and built on this knowledge. An abridged version of the novel on tape did not simplify language, but cut some descriptions from the literature. Slightly different information was supplied on tape for contrast and comparison, expanding, reinforcing and repeating the main themes. The teachers also used visual cues in the form of illustrations and video freeze frames to guide the children. Several children had previously read Roald Dahl, an author familiar to European children, in their own language. They were enticed by the unusual plots and the great deeds of children, in face of an unfair adult world. Several children had seen film adaptations of Dahl's novels, including *The Witches*. Thus, the familiarity and well appreciated content increased motivation and interest. One of the quieter German girls expressed her pride, in English, that she was old enough now to watch the film and not be afraid of witches. The American international school first hesitated on a course based on the theme of witches, as culturally and thematically inappropriate. However, the overwhelming enthusiasm of the children for this author and story, including the director's own daughter, convinced them the program should be tried.

Holistic Meaning

A theme-based integrated skills approach was taken. Listening and speaking became primary. The children loved repeating whole sentences to entire paragraphs from the film or tape, playing with rhyme and alliteration: "itch and witch" were constantly repeated and became a class slogan. The speaking goal was to allow for fluency in meaningful personal reactions and responses. Reading and writing (especially beyond the sentence level) were not developed extensively. One exception was in the one-to-one with the more advanced speaking child who used a guide-sheet with visual and sentence level cues to write his own portrait of witches. One teacher tried to use the content material to develop sentence level grammar exercises and focus on structure. The children did not appreciate treating the language as an intellectual game of abstract systems and naturally focused on the meaning rather than structure. This led the teacher back to a more holistic approach to meaning.

The Approach with Children

Unlike working with adults, we did not read the entire novel first, while listening to the book-on-tape, then follow by the entire film. The film was divided into 20 to 30-minute segments, based on crucial hinge scenes or turning points in the story. We were able to stop the film at critical moments to hold the learners' attention and provoke excitement and anticipation for the next class. One media constantly reinforced the other, allowing the children to come in contact with the same information from the reading passage, illustrations, listening to the tape and viewing the film, constantly interweaving all media and images available. The children also needed continual questioning and redirecting in order to process the information and make it their own. Repetition, in different forms, allowed for changes in perspective and new depth of understanding. They never hesitated to ask questions if any element of the story was not clear. Their limited proficiency or lack of vocabulary never stopped them from trying to understand the story. It is worthwhile to mention how the German children were able to concentrate on the listening, often with little visual support and answer the teachers questions immediately. They worked in a collaborative manner, as a whole class group, trying to complete tasks, answer questions and understand various levels to the story. The French children were much more restless and needed a task sheet/guide sheet focus for their attention during each listening or viewing. They enjoyed competitive games to see who got the information first. Tasks were always kept very simple and used to actively guide the children to overall understanding. Illustrations were often combined with the written word and then linked to the video image.

As is the case in using film and literature with older learners, we felt that preparing the children with a variety of pre-activities would activate their knowledge and interest. One teacher referred back to Halloween drawings of a witch's cauldron filled with the children's imaginary brew. They had decided on the ingredients and the results of drinking such a concoction. The content—based on the themes of witches and of reality versus imaginary—provided a meaningful context to practice a variety of language and even academic skills. Meaningful content-related vocabulary was reinforced and often recycled. The children practiced asking and answering questions, taking brief notes, and summarizing information in connected sentences. To "believe in," "I believe you," "magic spell," "turn into," "power," "real" and "imaginary" were clear concepts for the children as they began reading the book and watching the film. They became fascinated by the sounds of words in the Dahl text. Rhyming words to playfully amusing sounds intrigued the children who were not disturbed by meaning beyond the sound. One descriptive paragraph contained the list: *plotting, scheming, churning, burning, whizzing, phizzing.* The children repeated and played with these words again and again. The list took on more and more meaning as the story unfolded before the children.

A student contemplates a poster presentation he is preparing in relation to the book the class has just read.

The Physical Classroom

The classroom was decorated with witches of all shapes, sizes and colors. Real witches have certain characteristics which were clarified and checked repeatedly for understanding. This was a key concept in understanding the entire story. The later drawings of witches revealed how influenced the children were by those present in the story. The children finished the entire unit with a sliding visual storyboard of the main scenes. The English classroom became a visible decorated sign of the immersion in the text and its imaginative world. The German children were to use the material twice a week, but the teacher found them so involved with spin-off material that the book and film were used for several months. For example, there was a geography unit based on witches, cultural comparisons, and a biology theme on rats and mice. In the French school, the art teacher also had the children draw posters for horror films. The appropriate material seemed to be self-generating with the children. They continually asked more questions that led to new tasks, activities and approaches to the material.

Formulating Ideas

As with the adult learners, we also spent extended time on the first chapters to truly become involved and know the characters, the setting and the plot. A clear knowledge of the narrative structure helped prepare the basis for the evolving story. Children were well aware of narrative conventions because stories are important part of their lives. We spent time clarifying how to recognize a real witch, and what happens to children who are not aware and careful. Many of the activity ideas came from teacher resource books on video and literature for adults. Predicting through chapter titles and freeze frames on the screen excited the children and prepared them for the next viewing. They enjoyed describing what happened previously and what might happen in the next sequence. Descriptive vocabulary (bad, nasty, evil, frightening, kind, generous, intelligent, brave, understanding) was taken from the text and associated with illustration or drawings of characters. The children then did their own linking and semantic mapping. These tasks were later used for bare-bones retelling of certain key episodes. Students were always excited to tell their favorite part with prompts and questions from the teacher. Constant questioning and redirecting by the teacher helped the children formulate their ideas and check their understanding. Their multitude of creative questions also revealed the imagination was at work.

At the beginning, several chapters in the novel were covered in some depth to establish the characters and setting before watching the film sequence. This was also done to stimulate imagination before viewing. Parts of the novel which did not appear in the film were done in some detail to clarify emotions and fears later expressed in the film. Tasks centered on the general content of the story. Unlike adults, listening for words, we did not have to teach the children how to view or watch the film images for content. They never tried to understand each word. Thus, the tasks often related whole sentences or longer extended language use.

A Few Favorite Tasks

The children enjoyed doing simple pedagogical checking tasks such as: true/false (plus explaining "why?"), sequencing, sorting and labelling visuals or parts of the text. They also enjoyed matching sentences from the text to pictures drawn or illustrations. At one point, while matching sentences to pictures, the children automatically sequenced the pictures according to the story-line, colored them and began to tell the story. The young learners were adept at finding solutions or solving problems posed in the novel/film: How would you recognize a witch? What would you do? How would you get rid of the witch? Who is a witch? The children found the tasks fun and involved interacting with the texts on different levels, but did not want to do too many, as they were anxious to get on with the story.

Finish the sentence was another popular task: A mouse can _______, but a human can not _______. Mice can _______; a human can _______. Another version included: A boy has to _______; a mouse doesn't have to _______. Their imagination was rich in their creative responses. The children watched scenes answering: who? what? where? how?, or expressing what they could hear, feel and smell. Word webs were built around an adjective, a noun, the name of a character or an illustration. The children could select which task they preferred: ones with many words or phrases, or a simpler page with just a few expressions. Many adjectives describing the characters were generated, adjectives suitable for later work in writing full paragraphs from these cues. They also enjoyed miming the adjectives. The children were also given story frames, which served as prompts to write short texts of two to three linked sentences.

Listening Tasks

Listening tasks included a picture plus a checking question for focus. Illustrations were sequenced while-listening for retelling the story. Reading also became a prereading for the listening and viewing. Role plays were used where children pretended to be a character, mime a character or interview characters. The language remained simple, but fun. The texts gave comprehensible input that the children often recycled and used unconsciously. The children were asked to remember and predict through language activities and drawings. The input became a natural vehicle for exposure to tenses: would you… if…?, present and past tenses, conditionals, comparative, modals and so on. The focus remained on the meaning rather than the form. Language structures were adapted naturally by the children from the comprehensible input in a meaningful context. The children were given prompts for sentence-level structures such as: He likes…/She likes…, He's got… /He wants… /She can. They filled in grids with one word under such categories as: Luke wants to do, and you? /… wants to be…wants to have/… has difficulty. The language remained simple and repetitive for understanding and eventual production. During the listening, the children were asked to stop the teacher or recorder when they heard key words or phrases.

At one point, the children were given the choice of the task they felt most comfortable doing: (1) gap filling with just one word, (2) write a sentence from a prompt, or (3) write an entire paragraph linked together from a series of prompts. Several of the more confident children wrote very well-linked paragraphs. Resource books for teachers outlining tasks for adult language learners became valuable resources for children to interact with texts. The tasks were sometimes the same, but handled slightly slower, in simpler more manageable chunks, step-by-step with the children.

Conclusion

The children's imagination and predictions vastly surpassed adult responses to literature and film. The teachers were initially surprised how rapidly, enthusiastically and excitedly the children became involved in the text. The first week module generated the following teacher comment, after working with the German children: "Anyway, about the witches! I can really say that I have never had more animated lessons than this week. The story and the film certainly captured the imagination… They seemed to get the gist each time with little effort…" The teachers initially thought that pre-teaching would be difficult; but that useful, unknown vocabulary would be continually necessary. However, once the children were clear on the setting, the plot and characters, most pre-teaching was no longer necessary. The children became so involved in the world of the story they began to ask and wonder about who outside the classroom might be witches. The teachers now constantly search for films and reading of quality and appropriateness for their learner's age and background. The material, the children's enthusiasm and curiosity gave the teachers more than enough ideas for second language instruction focus.

A whole approach to the novel and film was closer to the children's developing literacy skills in L1, beyond the isolated word or one sentence level. The material provided a meaningful, relevant context for the particular age group involved. In addition, developing literacy skills such as prediction, inferencing, building and verifying hypotheses worked very naturally with children. They spontaneously took a more active and interactive approach to reading and listening due to their familiarity with story-telling. Furthermore, working with a real text in English made the children very proud, moving them towards the pleasurable aspect of reading. Lastly, a more global approach through responding, reacting, sharing interpretations, insights, personal meanings, imagination and pleasure not only appealed to the learners—thereby generating rich language production—but gave the teachers an inexhaustible bank of resources for the present and future. They would be able to develop second language skills alongside first language literacy skills, involving their young learners actively in an enriching, positive and motivating learning experience.

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Using Poetry to Build Classroom Communities

C. Hood Frazier

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> *Indeed it takes imagination to bring people together in these times in speech and action, to provoke them to try to understand each others' dreams. To me, one of the possibilities is that of drawing diverse people together to project, to reach out towards a more humane and fulfilling order of things.*
>
> Maxine Greene

The foundations of a meaningful classroom community can be established by helping students to see the world through the lens of poetry. That includes, of course, encouraging them to write original poems. It also means that the teacher must make a deliberate, conscious effort to help students feel free to share their opinions and insights with their peers, to take risks, and to make mistakes. If we can do this, then we will have freed students from a frequently encountered pedagogy that involves constant evaluative judgment. Such classrooms are tedious and counter-productive in that they promote conformity rather than learning. In this article, I discuss the classroom as a shared community space in which students take a more active role in addressing their own needs. I ground these theoretical principles by discussing three practical techniques: the poetic interview, the found poem, and the poetic field trip.

The Dynamic Presence of the Imagination

Like most students, most teachers have unique personalities and interests in which they can become truly alive. If we are willing to share these activities and viewpoints with our students, we can transform the classroom from a threatening and boring place to one where real growth occurs in the dynamic presence of the imagination. Because I am a practicing poet mysef and because I teach composition and teacher education, the world I create in the classroom is centered in exploring the possibilities of poetry. It is in this area that I focus my comments. It is important to note that in any subject and at virtually any level, students should have a voice in deciding how the class is structured and how the imagination is to be employed. In my classes, the students and I explore these issues and discuss class rules of behavior. It is not teacher-dictated behavior, but rather collaborative behavior that the group decides is best for the health of the class.

Language Play

Although I certainly cannot prove them, I firmly believe in two relevant principles. One is that an effective way to activate the imagination is through "language play," that is, through an interaction with ambiguity. For example, in language we can say things like "dry water," "moon in the sun," and "eyes broken like a stone." There is no single meaning for such phrases: often there are more than two interpretations. When we try to explore one of these meanings our imagination becomes alive in a way that seems impossible without this activity. The second principle is that such play, when explored as a group, is a fundamental step in constructing a meaningful community. Consequently, I integrate many oportunities in my classes for the writing, reading, and presenting of poems. I ask students to use this genre in exploring themselves, their peers, and their world. Throughout the semester, we engage in a variety of exercises designed to establish links among individuals and thereby develop bonds with each other.

A Most Reluctant Poet

If you think that this is well intended but mostly empty talk, consider David, a senior in high school who hated poetry writing and was only putting in time to graduate. He was also older than many of the students in the class, and was known as tough, opinionated and antagonistic. He was enrolled in my class because he had failed Senior English the previous year. He had refused to finish his work and had rebelled outright against his previous English teacher. Other teachers I spoke with said that they did not think that he would make it. But he was back again, needing the English credit to graduate.

He had come to the class with a strong disdain for English–especially writing–and hated expressing emotion of any kind in his work. He wanted his English class to consist of skill/drill exercises and worksheets that he could complete individually. A weak writer, he had spent most of his schooling in low-level English classes that did not demand him to reflect critically on his own performance nor to express himself. Resistant to all of my language play activities, David and I had a series of confrontations which ended with him being sent to "time-out"–a disciplinary practice during which the student and teacher meet alone to work out their differences. I discovered that David felt strongly that it was wrong of me to ask him to express his personal, private thoughts in poetry and that he would fail the class and drop out of school rather than have to compromise on this point. His moral objections to exploring his decidedly painful life was the source of his resistance. I was stunned: I had not realized that work in poetry could be so threatening. So, we agreed that he would return to class and I would reconsider my assignments.

The Phantom Poem

I intuitively felt that perhaps one type of poetic assignment that might prove important during this period was the "phantom poem"* a poem written from someone else's point of view to a listener who is not there. Similar to a dramatic monologue, the phantom poem encourages writers to create masks. To my surprise, David completed the assignment with a powerful first-person poem from the point of view of a rapist. Though the poem was intentionally disconcerting, it was as if he finally had an opportunity to articulate his anger, to create verbally something that he both despised and hated. By writing the poem, however, he was able to begin a process that not only caused him to think about his own demons but to realize that he had the power to create something that both challenged and moved people. Not only did he shock himself, but his classmates attacked him as if he were speaking about himself. I defended David's poem as an excellent example of a phantom poem and used it to demonstrate how powerful a voice can be created. For him, it was a validation of sorts. In the controlled situation of completing an exercise, he had written about something that we, his readers, found horrifying. In a sense, David had become one of us: he might still have been the black sheep, but he was a sheep. He was part of the community. He not only finished the class but graduated from high school, something that he told me later that he did not feel he was capable of.

It is this act of transformation that is inherently empowering and that is often lacking in our schools. As we continue to move toward accountability, testing, evaluation and a national curriculum, schools lose sight of the vital transformative power inherent in the creative act–something necessary to the well-being of both the individual student and the future of our culture. It is as Marx articulated: "The only comprehensible language which we can speak to each other...is not that of ourselves, but only that of our commodities and our mutual relations" (Shell, 5). Too often, we do not provide students with opportunities to make learning into a meaningful experience. Without such opportunities, students like David would not realize the connection between self and curriculum, between voice and language power. If we as educators, do not promote real understanding, we deprive our students of making meaningful connections through our collective memory which we call "culture."

Nel Noddings argues that one of the central components of quality education should be "centers of care: care for self, for intimate others, for associates and acquaintances, for distant others, for nonhuman animals, for plants and the physical environment, for the human-made world of objects and instruments, and for ideas" (xiii). Such a relationship between the self and the world is an essential premise in the construction of the classroom as a community.

The Poetic Interview

We begin each semester with the "poetic interview" so that students can learn about their classmates and

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**The term "phantom poem" was coined by Winston Fuller, professor of English at West Virginia University.*

engage in the act of writing poetry. This is also a good disgnostic tool to better understand the students' levels of sophistication about poetry. Initially, it is important to discuss the elements of an interview, a face-to-face, question-and-answer process designed to gather information. Sometimes the class will generate questions. First, there is the normal "Where are you from?" and "What is your name?" Then, we come up with some that are more unusual like, "What is something that you are afraid of?" and "If you were an animal, what would you be?" After brainstorming questions like these, I ask tham to develop a question or two on their own and feel free to use any of those generated by the class. Then, working in pairs, students interview each other for fifteen minutes. When they have finished, they are asked to present the individual to the class by writing a short poem. It is informative to understand how they conceive of the poem and to observe their act of writing. Finally, it generates good classroom discussion about what actually is a poem. Below is such a piece:

Frazier concentrates with a student in a class brought together by the writing of poetrty.

Brown Hair

Knit, green sweater
Sunlight racing to darkness
Moving within pale blue water
For now.

by Jarod Ambrose
University of Maine at Presque Isle

Initially, I do not evaluate their poems, but applaud their efforts and ask them to complete a short reflective process log entry on their responses to the exercise. These are usually positive and provide additional insights into both student attitudes and writing skills.

The Found Poem

After the risk and excitement of the poetic interview, we discuss what makes a poem–emotion, image, sound, and structure. Such cursory comments, however, deepen throughout the semester as we re-examine the question in light of more poems and more kinds of poetry. For example, I read examples of "found poems" such as those written by Margaret Anderson. These are usually composed from words that are collected from sources not intended as poetry but that produce interesting effects when juxtaposed. The sources might be road names, how-to directions, recipes, signs, or other unusual constructions found in everyday life. I also illustrate the concept using found poems that previous students have assembled. Then I ask them to scavenge for their own such poem. Jen Lynds' "Impaled" is a good example of a found poem. It is based on a story from *The National Inquirer* about a bicycle accident.

Impaled

Riding my bike
on a jagged edge
of a
wrought
fence,
one instant
I was iron
and the next
impaled
through the neck.

Jen Lynds
University of Maine at Presque Isle

There are several distinct advantages to approaching poetry in this way. First, it works with important poetic elements–organization, audience, line, image, sound, and surprise. Second, it is non-threatening and "safe" because it was produced by someone else. Our responsibility is limited. All we have done as writers is to change the line breaks. This is important because it encourages students to share their work in the emerging community. Third, finding words and playing with ambiguity tends to make students aware of the potential for creativity that exists in artifacts that are all around them. And there is a deeper purpose: by condoning the creative act in class, students begin to see its value in their own lives and their own learning. Too often in schools, poetry and creativity in general are dismissed by teachers as being untenable and unmanageable. Consequently, students are encouraged to memorize information and regurgitate it on tests.

The Poetic Field Trip

One of the best methods of encouraging writing is to move the class to an unfamiliar environment and to explore the concept of "place" in poetry. At least once each semester, I make a point of taking the students on a field hike. Before leaving, I have them search the anthologies I keep in the classroom for works that are somehow related to our destination. If appropriate anthologies are not available, I plan a class trip to the library or ask students to bring in songs that illustrate a connection to our upcoming hike. For instance, If we were going on a nature walk, I would select a traditional nature poem by Wordsworth or Emerson and compare it to a poem by Gary Snyder or Robert Bly. If the field trip was to the downtown mall, then city poets might fare more productive. I would cull out some of Frank O"Hare's "Lunch Poems" or William Carlos Williams' "Fine Works of Pitch and Copper." I might also introduce students to a specific writing technique like the "list poem" as a method to shape their work: sections from Walt Whitman"s "Song of Myself," Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" and Anne Waldman's "Fast Talking Woman" have proven to be good examples. Or I might actually discuss the songs or poems that the students bring to class in order to identify models for their upcoming poetic writing. In any case, it is valuable for students to find examples of poems they like.

Sitting and Listening

If we come across an interesting location on the nature walk itself, I ask each person to find a quiet place to sit and listen. After ten or fifteen minutes, I ask students to record what they see, hear, smell and feel. It is important that writers initially engage their senses to perceive the world around them before turning inward to memory, association and metaphor. This calls particular attention to their senses, and it illustrates how certain associations are made to the world around them. For instance, when we smell freshly cut grass, we might be reminded of when we were children and our family had our last cook-out of summer together. As we continue on the trip, I discreetly call attention to persons and things that I had found interesting for an unspecificed reason. They would do the same, either to the group as a whole or to the person next to them.

After reuniting back in the classroom, I would ask them simply to indicate key words that conveyed a sense of the place and of themselves. Utilizing the "list" techniques we had previously discussed, they could create a "portrait of place" poem, which embodied their feelings and associations as well as the details from that specific environment. Another option is for students to select the point of view of someone who they had seen during the field trip and describe the scene from his or her perspective. This empathetic approach helps student see things as others might see them. The most important part of the lesson is that each student's rendition of the place is unique. So after the poems had been written, we would have a class reading, stressing the point that each poem reflects as much about ourselves as about the place itself.

Making the Familiar Strange

Poetic field trips are an excellent method of engaging students in both the process of imaginative-exploration and of self-reflection–a essential component of critical thinking. It is the process of making the familiar strange. By looking at the world in this new way, students engage in the process of transforming the ordinary and of realizing that there are strong associations between that which is within us and that which is without. Equally importantl is the sense of sharing and community that develops slowly over the weeks and months of being involved in a somewhat complex, high-minded effort. Without a focused activity like the writing of poems, it is virtually impossible to identify in a certain sense with one's classmates. With such an effort, the lesson learned cannot be put into a textbook. Neither can it be easily forgotten.

Conclusion

As students begin the process of exploring the imaginative possibilities of "poetic play," they become better grounded as individuals and as members of their classroom community. They realize that each person perceives the world differently. When a student returns from a trip to the downtown mall with a poem writtin from the empathetic point of view of an older woman, he has made the imaginative leap from "self" to "other" and has begun the process of realizing the "new order of things" that Maxine Greene mentions. When the student finds that language itself is a powerful method of exploring both the self and the world, then such play takes on a new meaning. One, perhaps more closely akin to that of children who through their play transform the ordinary into the extraordinary and, in doing so, deepen and enrich their understanding of the world itself. When the swing set in the backyard becomes a submarine, when the wooden blocks on the floor become a village or cathedral, the very act of play transforms the objects into something imagined. Poetry writing happens in the same way.

Poetry connects the inner self to the world through association, memory, image and sound. Poetry provided David, the contentious senior, a way to express himself, to link his own inner demons to the world through an act of imagination. Kutz and Roskelly point out that "for Bruner as well as Bronowski, whether the existing system is a bureaucratic structure, a format for lessons, a poetic form, or a scientific problem, coming to new understandings involves moving outside of the existing system, reconceiving it and seeing it in new ways" (225). The value of writing the poem, then, is that it emerges from the twin acts of re-seeing the world and transforming the self–both necessary skills for the health and well-being of our culture in the 21st Century.

Possibilities in the meaning of a particular poem are discussed at the classroom podium.

> *Only when individuals are empowered to interpret the situations they live together do they become able to mediate between the object-world and their own consciousness, to locate themselves so that freedom can appear.*
>
> Maxine Green, *The Dialectic of Freedom*

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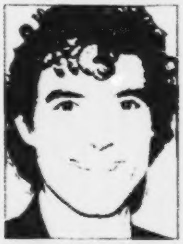
Literary Pantomimes: Students' Dynamic Creations

John Joseph Courtney



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Pantomime is showing itself to be a dynamic way for EFL students to interact with literary texts. Students actively seek to perform creative scenes from simplified, graded readers or authentic literature for their fellow classmates, who describe and reflect upon these presentations. When I first introduced "silent acting" with literature in an English class, I realized the accompanying benefits of heightening the students' interest and engaging their imaginations (Courtney, 1996b). Since that time, I have observed the value of the wholly student-created pantomimes in reinforcing or improving understanding in the text, and getting students to further take control of their learning processes.

Benefits

A pantomime is understood to be acting without words or, as it has been introduced to students, "silent acting." It is the "expression of something by bodily or facial movements only" (Merriam Webster, 1994, p. 530). Literary pantomimes involve students basing their silent acting on literary texts. There are substantial benefits for learners:

- Motivation to interpret texts
- Representing literary texts creatively
- Relating texts to physical action and positioning
- Gaining insights into texts from observing their peers' pantomimes
- Independently organizing and preparing performances
- Visualizing physical relationships and settings
- Projecting and representing textual sequencing and movement
- Conceptualizing and recreating literary images
- Representing characters' feelings, circumstances and points of view

Literary pantomimes can be introduced in many different ways in language classrooms, depending on the resources available as well as the imaginations and abilities of teachers and learners alike. What follows are some guidelines and reflections on and illustrations of the pantomimes. My Thai EFL students were generally at an intermediate level.

A Blend of Simplicity and Complexity

Literary pantomimes reflect a process that is intriguing for its blend of simplicity and complexity. Students are put into groups of three or four, and normally take at least one hour to prepare their pantomime(s) for the class. I have found that in classes of fifteen, where students have become comfortable speaking in English, groups are content in preparing two and, in some cases, three pantomimes. The students work on their pantomimes one or more days before the actual performances. This separation in time is very important because it allows students to read the text closely and discuss the many decisions they must make regarding the final presentation.

Interpreting for and from the Presentation

In rehearsal, student actors interpret scenes, sequences, concepts and imagery from the text. In performance, they present themselves in order for the other students to recognize and interpret the same textual elements. However, the members of the audience will be going in reverse, trying to find an appropriate understanding of the text through each pantomime. Each group that is responsible for a pantomime is free to choose any part or parts of the text for presentation. Whether a representation is easy or difficult to understand, obvious or obscure in relation to the text, students become mentally engaged with literature and with one another in a variety of ways.

Freedom in Preparation

Each group has the freedom of deciding how to prepare their literary pantomimes. Some students scan and discuss a number of scenes or chapters in their book, sometimes even choosing a scene and soon after discarding it when it is not working for them. Some students spend a great deal of their time silently practicing the actions of their scenes, with brief verbal clarifications. Other students quietly confer as they review selected passages. In one class, a couple of members from a group spent a significant amount of their time cryptically and humorously expressing to me and questioning what they intended to show in their pantomime. As in any collective, student-centered environment, students frequently tend to trade off on the strengths and weaknesses of each other in coming to terms with the task at hand.

Length of Performance

There is no time-limit for the performance of a literary pantomime, and pantomimes have lasted from under a minute to many minutes. A shorter pantomime, however, does not mean that it is easier to interpret. The shortest that has taken place in my class happened to be one that was "frozen"–nobody moved. After the lights were turned off, two performers assumed postures in relation to each other: one stepping forward and bowing as he joined hands with the other man. The postures were held while the lights were switched on for two seconds and then switched off again. The students requested the group to repeat the scene. The scene subtly captured the personalities of Count Dracula and Jonathan, with Dracula in a domineering position. (*Dracula* is the story of a vampire who transforms himself in countless ways, often as a vampire bat, in pursuit of his victims. He is an extremely cunning, dreadful yet enticing creature, who works in the night.) When the lights were turned on, the atmosphere associated with the scene, as well as Dracula's power, was dissipated: the pantomime had ended. In general, the freezing of the action in a pantomime could indicate a change of a scene or event, or bring to a close the students' interpretative performance. Regardless of the length of a scene, students are challenged to describe the pantomime that they have just seen.

Students rehearse a scene from Dracula.

Dramatic Techniques and Abstract Relations

In viewing the pantomimes, students are exposed to a number of dramatic techniques and abstract relations employed by their classmates. A dramatic technique is defined as a particular way that students attempt to aid their classmates in making connections to a certain piece of literature. Whether the performing students are aware of a noticeable dramatic technique is beside the point: many a famous actor or writer remains unaware of his or her creative processes. (Harold Pinter, the famous, contemporary British playwright, has claimed that he just does "the donkey work".) Dramatic techniques observed in the pantomimes have included sequencing, positioning, movement, gesticulating, stillness, sounds, an actor playing two parts, and the use of props or signs. Examples that will be elaborated on below have included sequences of Dracula taking control of his victims, two men angrily thrusting their arms toward one another in argument, the movement of a vampire's wings, and the sound of a gunman striking his adversary. An abstract relation is understood as an attempt to depict an idea, event or image that must be surmised or remembered by the students. Returning to the moment and image of Jonathan meeting Dracula, the literal event is a short ten lines, accompanied by an illustration, in a 118-page story. In understanding, realizing and feeling the deeper significance of the scene, the characters' relations and attributes would be reflected upon or described. Although Dracula is just meeting Jonathan, he is already planning to control and, ultimately, possess Jonathan. The abstract relation here is one man anticipating his dominance of another.

Performing Images

Dramatic techniques and abstract relations are sometimes combined with varying levels of complexity. (Of course, this depends on the level of proficiency and the age of the students involved.) Of particular interest are students' efforts to recreate literary images, as in the above example of *Dracula*. The poor farmer from the Northeast of Thailand, desiring to avenge the murder of his family, reacts with fascination and apprehension as the heavy, invisible revolver is placed in his hands (from "A Hired Gunman," *People of Esarn).* In becoming a hired gunman, the man resorts to violence in a similar way to those officials who had his poor family killed. Tom Canty and Edward Tudor changing their clothes, and thus their appearances, in front of an imaginary, great mirror, a scene played from *The Prince and the Pauper,* was obvious for the students to see. The two boys who look like twins seek to experience each others completely different socioeconomic circumstances. Sometimes the blur between "dreaming" and reality has provided some challenging pantomimes for the students, especially as in *Dracula* where more than one character has dreamlike encounters. Some students interpreted one pantomime as Dracula coming to suck Lucy's blood as she slept, and then Mina came to wake her. Mina is Jonathan's fiance; and Lucy, her friend. In fact, the performing group explained that "Lucy went out of the house at night, and Dracula came to see her in the churchyard. When Dracula saw Mina, he went away." Given the limitations of our small room, some important movements had not been seen by some students.

John Courtney watches students prepare a pantomime.

Movement, Positioning and Sequencing

One group's solution to the narrow confines of the room was to position one member outside the glass-door, flapping her arms as a vampire bat. It so happened that, as she was doing this in relation to the action inside, other students were changing classes and the situation became quite humorous. In some pantomimes there can be a tremendous amount of movement, sometimes through multiple scenes. One group showed John Canty trying to catch his son (in fact, Prince Edward). Later he angrily accosts Edward and Edward's friend, Miles Hendon, at London Bridge. Through quick and pointed gesticulating, the emotions, strengths and weaknesses of the characters were apparent. Furthermore, although the book does not actually show John chasing Edward before the confrontation at the Bridge, the story implies that he is continually in pursuit of his son (so what the students are beginning to do is to read between the lines). In a recent pantomime related to "A Hired Gunman," after relentlessly stalking and eying his intended victim in small circles that our room allowed, the silence was broken as the killer suddenly and forcefully grabbed the victim's shirt and jerked him forward. The action was so realistic that the two actors were momentarily startled, and the whole class burst into laughter.

From *Silas Marner,* some groups chose emotionally intense scenes for their pantomimes. One involved the attempted negotiation by Godfrey and Nancy with Silas to take his daughter, Eppie away from him. Later this pantomime moves to the scene of Eppie marrying Aaron (thus covering an entire chapter). Silas Marner is the story of a thrifty, hard-working, solitary man, who later finds love and happiness with a girl, Eppie whose life he saved. Another pantomime took the students from a sinister discussion to a light and funny moment, as two students played a rider and the horse, Wildfire, and then into the pivotal scene of Dunstan stealing Silas's gold. Dunstan is Godfrey's irresponsible, malicious, drunken brother. Through the pantomimes, the students' thinking is reflected by the range and depth of material covered, the actions and emotions displayed and the general atmosphere and momentum.

Double Roles, Props and Sounds

A student playing two roles in a pantomime can pose unique challenges to the discernment of the students. In a scene from *Silas Marner* mentioned above, an actor played the parts of both Nancy and Aaron, as five characters were needed. As the students are frequently exerting themselves to first recognize and then interpret and reflect upon the pantomime, a student switching parts might cause some confusion and disorientation. However such extra, mental exertion on the part of the audience might have them focus on a scene from different angles as well as question their own assumptions and understanding. In another scene, Sam, a beggar out for revenge, thrust a stolen purse into Prince Edward's hands and ran away. A few moments later the same student returned, this time as a policeman. Students humorously remarked on this afterwards.

One student used a stuffed animal, a cat, to show that, as Refield—another victim of Count Dracula—

flies were no longer enough to satisfy his hunger. This followed his soft chewing sounds. The cat was just meant to be symbolic though, as Renfield was not permitted to have one. The abstraction was picked up by a student when she described Renfield's "hobby of feeding flies to spiders and giving the spiders for sparrows." The performing group added the point that he was a "life-eating lunatic." One group wrote three words in a box on the board: KING NOW DEAD.

Moments of laughter are often found in Courtney's class.

As there were more than one fight-scene with somebody getting thrown out of the room in *The Prince and the Pauper,* the group perhaps wanted the class to be thinking about the right one. Other intentional, if momentary, distractions in pantomimes have included an "ouch," a "boom" and the sound of galloping; however, the performances and the moments immediately afterward are fundamentally silent.

A Mental Puzzle

The quietness continues after the completion of a pantomime, as students attempt to write a description of what they just watched. Some students are uncertain how to approach the writing at first, but it soon becomes a natural part of the process. This is the time that the audience can reflect on what was shown. What did the scene represent? What did they understand, conceptualize and imagine? Even when students are certain in their recognition of the scene, they will still be thinking about associated detail, sequencing, deeper meaning and, perhaps, even why the group chose that particular scene to depict (for example, the ill-fated handshake in *Dracula).* From the start of a pantomime, the process may be seen as students trying to fit in pieces of a mental puzzle.

Dualities

Earlier mention was made of the dualistic nature of the pantomimes.After students spend a little time writing their descriptions of a pantomime, the group that had performed calls on individuals to share their accounts. Then that group offers its own explanation. There is often agreement on the basic, literary content of the pantomime, but the level of detail does vary. Although the performing group usually gives a full description, other students sometimes have picked up other details. For example, in *Dracula,* the presence of garlic flowers in Lucy's room was referred to, while the performing group explained, "While Lucy has long sharp teeth and looked pale, Dr. Van Helsing tried to take care of her…Lucy became crazy, as a bat was outside." Lucy was becoming a vampire also. As you can see, the descriptions become quite detailed. Certainly mistakes are made, and some of the pantomimes I was unable to identify on the spot, while my students were able to provide accurate and descriptive accounts. The students share their views, and then it is time to be silent again for the next pantomime.

Actually there are many dualities connected to the pantomimes: the text and the preparation; the preparation and the performance, the pantomime and the viewing, the written description, the resolution of what the performing group had thought, and the various mental functions that play off each other for the students in the preparation, playing and viewing–functions such as interpretation, reflection, imagination, pinpointing and conceptualization. Some students even, independently, check information in their text after a performance. On a day of pantomime, the classroom is extremely busy with students interacting with each other in a variety of ways.

Dialectical Processes

There are a number of dialectical processes occurring with the pantomimes that can be widely expanded to the teaching of EFL and ESL and the development of materials. The processes involve students forming understanding in relation to literary texts, encountering differing points of view and interpretations from other learners and through their own reconsideration, and synthesizing their ideas. In the pantomimes, the students are taking different starting points in order to perform and discover the truth of the text. (This might work differently in western countries. Pennycook (1996, pp. 221-222) explains how Chinese culture has been associated with viewing reality in the literary text, rather than the text representing reality.) The students help each other develop understanding, and they choose, control and adapt the content from the text and how they will perform it. As each pantomime is not only different but unpredictable, students try anew, many times, to seek understanding and reconcile their ideas with the text and each other.

Pantomimes, Initiative and Freedom

Harmer (1998, 1996) highlights the importance of engagement in his ESA model of language-learning: Engage—Study—Activate. Basically, there has to be some part of the lesson that really gets the students interested and involved. Then they can become activated, producing or thinking in real language. In the pantomimes, we see a process where students engage each other (yet another dialectic). Hollett (1996) describes how, in letting students be free to provide the content of their lessons, "the traditional presentation, practice, production procedure can be put into reverse" (p. 2). The pantomimes are one way to show that this is highly possible, with the students greatly taking charge of the functions of practice and presentation too. This is in line with a process of language education that develops students' understanding and ability to become cooperative, self-directed and autonomous in their learning (for example, Brown, 1994, Kohonen, 1992, Nunan, 1995). Tudor (1996) describes a development from learner involvement to learner empowerment. Pantomimes can be introduced in the simpler form of charades. Diaz (1996) has developed an "information gap format" of pantomimes. With the pantomimes, we have an opportunity to give students...control to develop their own meaningful experiences" (Courtney, 1996a, p. 59). Mundy (1996) quotes Liesenborghs, "The real objective is to get the student motivated, interested, and confident enough to explore the language on his or her own."

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The Power of Dramatizing Case Studies in ESP

Russell Dinapoli has lived and taught English in Valencia, Spain since 1977. He received an MFA in playwriting from UCLA, and a PhD in Philology from the Universidad de Valencia, where he is a lecturer in the Department of English and German. He has written articles and given talks and seminars in Spain and in the United States on the subject of drama and literature in applied linguistics. Additionally, he has written and directed plays and worked as a theatre critic and radio script writer, and translated several books of poetry.

Russell Dinapoli

"Staging" a case study can breathe life and excitement into an otherwise dull set of stereotypes and often stiff prose. That is the great value of using dramatic techniques in the teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The student performer attempts to express verbally and kinetically the implicit inner environment of a character in a given situation. Even if he or she is only partially successful in creating that character, the excitement of the moment draws on almost everything the student has ever studied about English. The room is charged with the electricity of the conflict.

The CEO's recommendations have grave implications for his management committee. Disagreements on just how to realize those recommendations bring the crisis to a head. The tension cannot continue. The classroom "actors" and audience are caught up in the human dimension of a living problem. The emotions are decidedly of the moment. A resolution must be found, and when it occurs, the play-like exercise is over.

Use of Learned Language

A most valuable situation for language learning has just taken place. Students have experienced the invaluable need to express and understand, and have consequently reached deep inside themselves to find what is essential to communicating aspects of the conflict. Langor (1953, 315) points out that any dramatic text is not just lines of dialogue, but human responses to events in "direct discourse." Nouns, verbs, adjectives, phrases, expressions and principles of intonation that students had learned long ago are suddenly brought out by urgencies of the dramatic situation. To achieve such a situation, it is very effective to use the "case study," which usually consists of a description of the characters and a specific problem in need of solution. The nature of the situation of course depends on the nature of the profession or business in which the language study is taking place.In any case study approach, one fortunate constant is the creativity and dynamism that are inherent. Problem-solving and situational analysis can occur, and that is very good. But even better for the language teacher is that action and inter-action are the principal referents. There are, however, downsides in the use of the case study, and we should point them out before going deeper into the part creativity plays in this approach. We will also offer several specific suggestions on how to make these negative aspects positive.

Downsides

Unfortunately, the abundance of material of a technical nature used in ESP courses tends to keep language specific programs locked into a narrow confine. In an attempt to deal with this limitation, Kelly and Krishnan (1995:80) incorporated literature in an ESP curriculum at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. They were also interested in complimenting what they considered to be the "broader academic needs" of their students. For similar reasons, thematically relevant plays were included in the curriculum of Business English courses at the University of Valencia School of Economics (Dinapoli and Algarra, 2000).

The main drawbacks of most of the case studies used in ESP textbooks is that they perpetuate social stereotypes, and student performances are focused mainly on duplicating the texts, which seem derivative. Because there is little or no implicit personal environment expressed by the performers, role-playing becomes awkward and mechanical. Focusing on the contextual explicitness of a text rather than on the implicit inner environment of the characters results in drill-like performances, as patterns are repeated or varied slightly, and characterizations become redundant. For example, the ideal "manager" or "CEO" is repeated over and over again. Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics have widened the pragmatic dimension in the language acquisition field by focusing attention on the dynamics of speech acts in communication. The problems, however, created by the complex and unpredictable nature of learning require a multiple-skilled and performance-based approach (Gimenez and Dinapoli, 1999) that allows for creativity. Generally, this is not dealt with in Discourse Analysis or Sociolinguistics.

Creating a Character

In order to get students to interact creatively, the implicit aspects of the inner environments of the characters need to be channeled into the explicit context of a situation. We can accomplish this by encouraging students to use their creative faculties when analyzing case studies. Following are six questions that many professional actors ask themsleves when creating a character from a given text. These questions are most relevant to the dramatization of case studies.

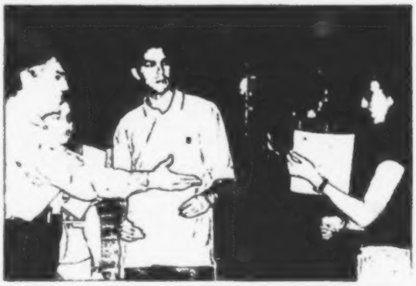
1. Who am I?
2. What are my circumstances?
3. What is my relationship to the person I am talking to?
4. What do I want?
5. What keeps me from getting what I want?
6. What can I do to overcome the obstacles?

When these questions are used to analyze characters in case studies found in Business English textbooks, the context ceases to be simply, say, a board meeting. There come together two important elements:

(A) The explicit context provided by the text, and

(B) The implicit environment of the students as performing characters.

Drama succeeds in ESP when the performers no longer see their characters as business executive stereotypes, but as real people with inner environments that need to be analyzed, using both logical and creative thinking, and interactively expressed in an explicit context. Towards this end, drama and case studies adhere, bringing together analytical and non-analytical modes in a multi-skilled and performance based approach.



Dr. Dinapoli waits for a student to deliver lines from the script she is holding.

Creativity as a Language Learning Skill

A key ingredient to the above approach to ESL involves the rather complex notion of creativity. Foreign language instructors generally agree that the notion of proficiency includes the four language skills, as well as structural, semantic, discoursal and other communicative aspects. But another skill is creativity, perhaps the least addressed component in the foreign and second language teaching field. Vaguely associated with "imagination," "invention" or "wit," creativity is not easily evaluated in the current classroom context. Perhaps this is one reason why creativity tends to be ignored as a language learning skill.

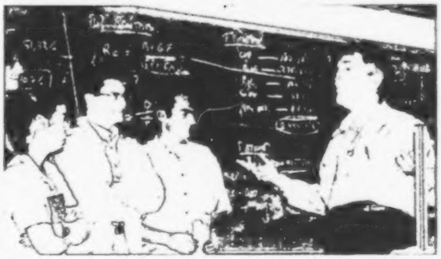
Difficult to Define

The difficulty in defining creativity in second or foreign language acquisition makes it an unappealing research topic. As a result, those foreign language teachers who recognize the importance of creativity in the learning process have relatively little to draw on from textbook authors. This is especially the case for higher education instructors, and in particular for those who work in the area of Language for Specific Purposes.

Relevant Literature

The reticence of textbook authors notwithstanding, several methodological attempts have been introduced that use literature, and in particular drama, to generate the "creative" aspects of normal discourse in the learning environment. While some authors (Collie and Slater, 1990; Lazar, 1993; and Whiteson, 1996) subsume drama under general literature, others focus specifically on the use of drama in second and foreign language teaching (Parry, 1972; Via, 1976; Nomura, 1982; Smith, 1984; Maley and Duff, 1984; Di Pietro, 1994; and Kao and O'Neill, 1988). Additionally, various authors focus on spcific aspects involving the use of drama in the language learning context: Hegman (1990) discusses the impact of affect on cognition; Stern (1980) analyses the psycholingujistic variables involved; Scarcella (1978) suggests using "socio-drama" to heighten classroom interaction; Via (1987) proposes introducing "the magic if" to stimulate the imagination; Courtney (1990) places drama on a par with intelligence; and Di Pietro (1994) discusses the fundamental dramatic nature of human interaction.

The Usefulness of the Case Study



Dr. Russell Dinapoli demonstrates the use of effective gesture in dramatizing case studies.

As we have pointed out, one of the most useful approaches in the language learning field today is the case study model. Focusing on the development of situational analysis as well as integrated skills, including problem-solving abilities, the approach addresses content through the use of culturally authentic materials that are promoted in meaningful activities. Originally adopted by the Harvard School of Business (Hammon, 1980; Christensen, 1981; and Gragg, 1982), several authors (Cotton and Owen, 1980; Piotrowsky, 1982; Dow and Ryan, 1987; Uber Grosse, 1988; Westerfield, 1989; St. John, 1996; and Bonet, 1997) have written on the significance of case studies in the language learning environment. They stress the functional inter-communicative tenor of the approach. But while acknowledging that role-playing contributes to the learning process, they–with the exception of Dow and Ryan (1987)– choose to ignore the creative dimension of case studies.

ESP is one of the areas where the case study approach is especially promising. St. John (1996:10) observes that there is "quite extensive use of case studies and simulations" going on in Business English courses. Fundamental to the approach is the interpretation of roles in various situations. Students expand on information extracted from real cases while they interact in simulations. However, unlike the real case studies analyzed in many schools of business, law and medicine, cases used in Business English tend to be fictional. For example, a meeting is called for the management committee to discuss what to do about the CEO's recommendation (Comfort and Brieger, 1998: 38).

In this sense, case studies are similar to plays. Students, like actors, analyze fictional texts and interpret the characters in them. Typically, a role depicts a character ideal, such as the Managing Director, the Human Resources Director, and the Workers' Representative, with a character description provided for each one: e.g., "You joined PCCorp as a young graduate 20 years ago" (39).

Value of Traditional Plays

Given that Business English textbook authors use fictional case studies, it would seem that selected dramatic texts, written by established playwrights, might also be employed. Using discourse analysis, Short (1983) comments on Harold Pinter's play *Trouble in Works*. The play, depicting a discussion between a factory owner and a foreman as to why the workers refuse to manufacture a product, could also be analyzed as a case study in an intermediate Business English course. Case study material can be found in plays by other well-knolwn authors such as Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*: for example, in the scene between Willy Loman and his boss Howard Wagner in Act Two, when Willy asks to be transferred to New York and Howard fires him.

That a text is untrue does not affect the performance of illocutionary acts. Thus, textbook authors, like playwrights, can use the "as if" mode (Searle 1975: 324). Moreover, intermediate level Business English students are used to handling fictional, non-serious discourse, and most of them are likely to have already role-played fictional characters and events depicted in texts. Indeed, one of the main limitations of using such prepared creative dramatic texts is that there are so few of them. Another is that working with a minimal text like the case study tends to dynamically involve the actors in the fleshing out of their own situation and characters. It could be argued that the case study can serve as a productive prototype for the creation of materials that would be quite useful in any language learning situation.

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English through Opera

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> *In that moment, I felt that I was one of them. I can really understand their feeling. It is amazing. I never have this kind of feeling before. I think that if the story without music, I maybe would not love this story so much.*
>
> Taiwanese ESL Student

Unlikely as it may seem, ESL students can become totally involved in opera, perceiving subtle as well as strong emotions in languages they can't begin to understand. High motivation and meaning can be among the benefits of the use of this theatrical genre in the English language classroom. By addressing language, traditions, and beliefs, opera can touch the very souls of our students through its music and stories. The themes–universal and familiar to students from Asia, Europe and South America–incorporate human issues: love, passion, hate, greed, honor and death. Students welcome the opportunity to voice their feelings on such themes and to identify with some of the opera's controversial subjects and characters. Those who are young–as well as those who are not so young–have an opportunity to relate similar stories from their native countries and to marvel about how many ideas and values they have in common.

Krashen and Freire

I agree with Stephen Krashen–"meaning matters" (Wink, 1997, p. 153). ESL students want real life; they want real challenge. They want to hear, see, taste and touch the richness of what our world has to offer. According to Paolo Freire, "Learning should be rigorous and joyful" (Wink, 1997, p. 153). Learning should be active, not passive. Students who are exposed to authentic content in their ESL classrooms often build bridges of cross-cultural awareness between themselves and their peers with diverse backgrounds. They are exposed to complex information and are involved in demanding activities that can lead to intrinsic motivation. Opera can provide exactly such opportunities.

Background

I usually begin by asking my students what they know about opera or similar musical traditions in their own countries. Since not all students are familiar with opera, I explain that opera is drama set to music. It is made up of vocal pieces with orchestral accompaniment and with orchestral overtures and interludes. Operas are usually sung in the language in which they were originally written. The reason for not performing an opera in translation is that the musical values of certain syllables are not preserved when one changes languages. In some modern opera houses, like the Metropolitan Opera in New York City, subtitles are available on an electronic display. The languages in which operas have been written include Italian, French, German, Russian, and English. [More information on the history of the opera is provided in the appendix to this article.]

Specifics on Using La Traviata

I do not feel that the original language should limit the selection of which opera to use in the classroom. The translations of the non-English librettos are excellent and are written in literary English. The instructor should have the freedom to select the opera based on its story, themes and music rather than the language it is sung in. My personal tastes and preferences were the basis for choosing the many wonderful operas that I have used in my ESL classes. Perhaps the most accessible of these is *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi. This work is based on a play, *La Dame aux Camelias* (The Lady of the Camellias) written in 1852 by Alexander Dumas. The play, in turn, was based upon the life of Marie Duplessis who, in 1847, died of tuberculosis at age 24. Some say that to this day, people put flowers on the grave of Ms. Duplessis in the cemetery of Montmarte, directly below the church of Sacre Coeur, in Paris. The play became popular in the United States under the name *Camille* and was made into a wonderful 1936 motion picture starring Greta Garbo (Frieden, and Elliott, 1998-2000).

To prepare the students and widen their horizons, it is important to give them the historical background of the times. I ask my students to step back into the mid-19th century Europe–France, where sexual hypocrisy, prostitution and gambling were widespread, even as they were publicly condemned. Men were expected to have mistresses whom they supported financially–but they had to conceal them and not fall in love with them. These women were called courtesans and were not classed with common prostitutes. Respectable women feared and detested the courtesans (women of the demimonde) and would not permit them to mix in the "polite society," or the high society (beau monde). It was believed that any woman who slept with a man before marriage was thought to be "ruined." Furthermore, these women were presumed to extract their wealth from young men and then abandon them. Therefore, it would have brought shame on a "respectable" family if a son married a woman of the demimonde' (Brians, 1999; Frieden and Elliott, 1998-2000).

The Triumph of True Love

When Alexandre Dumas ("junior") fell in love with a notorious and charming courtesan named Marie Duplessis, his father was very unhappy. His father, Alexandre Dumas–the author of such novels as *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*–was highly respected and wealthy. The father naturally feared that his son would ruin the family's reputation and fortune and, therefore, he forced the young man to break off the relationship (Brians, 1999). Soon after, Marie Duplessis died of tuberculosis, the most common and deadly disease in the 19th century. To avenge himself against his father, the son wrote a novel and then a play. In it, an idealized courtesan, Marguerite Gautier, who loves camellias, proves to be more loving and generous than the hero's father. This story brings out the principle that a good heart is more important than propriety. It suggests that the social distinctions, which split the high society from the world of demimonde, are cruel and hypocritical, and that true love must triumph over all (Brians, 1999). In 1853, the Italian composer Giuseppi Verdi turned the story into one of the most popular operas ever written: *La Traviata*–"The Fallen Woman." He changed the courtesan's name to Violetta. Violetta falls in love with Alfredo, a young man from the beau monde, but she is destined to die young from tuberculosis. The themes that are constant throughout this opera are love, money and death. This background information can be introduced at various places in the lesson. It could be part of the introduction. However, if the instructor wants the students to do more guessing and predicting, it is best saved for later stages.

Listening

The next step is to present selections from the music to capture the students' attention and interest. Students listen to the original areas and duets in Italian while following along the Italian/English libretto. The four selections I use are duets–one from each act: "Libiamo," "Morro! La Mia Memoria," "Di Provenza il Mar," "Parigi, 0 Cara." It is good to use some of the more famous or popular melodies, which the students might have heard before. In choosing the excerpts, I also try to select those that could help the students predict the story–introducing central characters (like Violetta, Alfredo and Germont), situations, and melodic moods. This will allow the students to get a better idea of the story.

At first, I do not reveal the name of the composer or the opera the students are listening to. They have to listen, follow along with the translation, and imagine the characters and the stage: who is singing, how many people, what is their relationship to each other, what costumes are they wearing, etc. The students are also asked to determine whether there is a conflict between the characters, and if there is, to determine the nature of this conflict. The students listen to one aria/duet from each act of the opera with libretto in front of them, and they are asked to predict the complete story from the music that they've just heard. As one Bangladeshi student reflected, "I heard different language, but I read English. It was very unusual like subtitles of the film..." The students were fascinated and intrigued by this unusual and demanding activity and were extremely motivated. A French student wrote:

> You can hear the music without understanding what the singers sing because it is not the lyrics that are important but the intonation, the feelings that the singers give to their voices. You can

feel happiness when the rhythm is gay and joyful or you may be crying when a soprano holds a note high in the heavens and makes it fall dawn abruptly on the ground as if she was dying.

Cooperative Learning through Speaking

As Lev Vygotsky said "It's fun to talk with a friend while we learn" (*Wink*, 1997, p. 153). The students discuss the above-mentioned questions in small groups and comment on their feelings and reactions. The responses vary. The students are very creative and intuitive. They often understand from the initial librettos that there is love between two people, that love is impossible, that Violetta wants to sacrifice her love and/or life and that the ending is very tragic. The themes of love, death and sacrifice become apparent from the music and these four librettos. Once we get through these musical selections, I introduce additional subtopics dealing with the origins of the opera genre, the life of Giuseppe Verdi and general historical background of the times. The students are then given authentic reading selections from such texts as *The World of the Opera*, or an encyclopedia. The reading and discussion of background notes on *La Traviata* might be either introduced here or after the students complete reading the full text.

Dr. Ninah Beliavsky (center) explains a scene from La Traviata in her ESL class.

Reading

We usually read this opera as a "jigsaw activity." Each group receives only one act, reads and studies it, and discusses it with the members of the group. At this point students answer simple "wh" questions (Where, When Who, etc.) regarding this selection. Then the students are regrouped into new groups. The new group consists of one or two members who know each act of the opera. They can share their knowledge and engage in cooperative learning in order to answer more complex comprehension questions about the complete opera, and do cloze exercises, and vocabulary and grammar exercises. At this point, every group knows the complete story of the opera. By engaging in these "information gap" activities, the students are forced to exchange information in a natural way. These language activities are not artificial or meaningless–they are embedded within discourse. Hence, the students are exposed to a considerable amount of language while learning interesting content.

Writing

The next step is writing. The students have to answer hypothetical questions and record their feelings and answers in their journals. Some of the questions that I assign for journal writing are:

- If you were Violetta, would you have given up Alfredo for the good of his family
- Do you think that Violetta was a noble woman?
- Did she truly love Alfredo?
- If you were Alfredo, would you ever forgive your father?
- Do you think that the father will ever be able to forgive himself and reconcile the situation with his son?

This is one of the pre-writing stages to essay writing–which follows. I usually assign a question such as cause and effect or analysis for the essay. Students need to write an essay with a thesis statement and development.

To the first question: "If you were Violetta, would you have given up Alfredo for the good of his family?" students reacted in various ways. However, regardless of their cultural background, their responses were similar. I think that because such themes as love, money and death are universal, they transcend all cultures and can reach ESL students from all over the world. For example, one Taiwanese student wrote: "If I were Violetta, I am not as noble as she, I wouldn't give up my real love. Especially when I knew I had a serious disease and was going to die, I can't let my love gone without love..." A student from France wrote: "If I were Violetta during this century, I think I would have acted in another way... I think I would have given to Violetta all the powers of revenge against the father..."

Follow-up

This lesson can serve as a bridge to many other activities. As part of experiential learning, the students can watch the movie *Camille*, research other operas, historical events and composers. For example, they can read about other works by Verdi (i.e. *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, etc.) They can listen to other operas and go to see one. This lesson incorporates all the traditional elements and skills of language learning–listening, speaking, reading and writing–in a way that encourages the students to learn. Students are exposed to complex information and are involved in very demanding activities. These activities are not artificial but authentic and contextualized. They can also help students develop critical thinking skills thus leading to intrinsic motivation. Motivation is everything. Let me share with you what the students themselves had to say about this lesson.

Student Comments

A student from Dominican Republic wrote:

> *Today's class was so different, but I really should say it was special. I was so surprised the way that the class was taught today. I hope that I get another class like this one.*

A student from Egypt wrote:

> *The story was wonderful. It filled me with emotion, sacrifices, love and sadness.*

A student from Taiwan wrote:

> *I never heard any opera before you gave me this chance in class...It is so beautiful that using music to express the human feeling and romance of love.*

A Chinese student wrote in her journal:

> *Dear Diary, I had tears in my eyes while I was listening to the tape of the Opera: La Traviata. The music was great. Ijust love it. My emotion was going up and down with the music. I can almost understand the story while I was listening to the music. The strong beats of the music, high tone singing and the combination of the different singers just make the store so wonderful and also with the sadness. I can almost picture the story while I am listening to it. I think that is why I love music plays so much. After reading and listening to the whole story, I just can't think about anything else for a long time. People told me that you would do anything to make the person you love happy. Everything will be worth it when you see the smile form his face. I don't quite believe that before, but I am now somehow believing that. People said that music is the soul of life. I strongly agree with that. With out music life will be dead, no fun.*

Another student from Taiwan recalled a story she had heard in her childhood:

> *I think it is a very beautiful story. The story is made by author but it is a real story. It is like an old Chinese story. When in the class, I listened to the music and imagined the story. I can get a very emphasized feeling. I felt that I was in the theater and looked at the opera. I never thought that music and libretto can give people so great image. In that moment, I felt that I was one of them. I can really understand their feeling. It is amazing. I never have this kind of feeling before. I think if the story without the music, I maybe would not love this story so much.*

A few other students compared this tragic love story to the impossible love between two young people in William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Others compared "Violetta's sacrifice to Behrman's sacrifice in O. Henry's "Last Leaf.." A final note: A few students were so moved by the music and the story that they cried in class and asked me to bring in a schedule to the opera season at the Metropolitan Opera. Others begged me to tell them a story of another famous opera. Meaning does matter and interesting content peaks motivation–students want to know. As one student said: "This is a special way to read a story. I hope we can read another story like this and hear the opera or see a beautiful painting."

APPENDIX: NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF THE OPERA

The English word "opera" is an abbreviation of an Italian phrase "*opera in musica*" ("work in music"). It names a theatrical form consisting of a dramatic text, which is called a "libretto", which in Italian, means a "booklet" or a "little book." It may be in verse or prose; it may be original or an adaptation of an existing play or novel. A libretto is combined with music, usually singing. In addition to arias (solos), duets, ensemble, and choral singers, an opera may include a group of instrumentalists and dancers. There may be spoken dialogue, but that's very rare. More often the music is continuous and is designed to dramatize the action and display the vocal skills of the singers (*The Concise Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*. Third Edition).

Dr. Beliavsky (left) and two students study illustrations in a book on opera.

Opera began in Florence, Italy in the late sixteenth century where a group of scholars and musicians promoted the principle of simple melodic declamation imitating ancient Greek drama. In 1637 the first public opera house opened in Venice. The opera of the 17th and 18th centuries featured mythological scenes. Romantic elements entered in the 19th century. Opera with spoken dialogue, or opéra comique, led toward operetta, and also toward the serious, lyrical works such as Georges Bizet's *Carmen*. Giuseppe Verdi and, later, Giacomo Puccini–in such works as *La Traviata* and *Madama Butterfly*—exemplified the lyric-dramatic Italian style. The 19th century saw the birth of Russian opera in Mikhail Glinka, Peter Tchaikovsky, Modest Mussorgsky, and Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov. The 20th century gave us works by such composers as Richard Strauss, Alban Berg, Arnold Schoenberg, Dmitry Shostakovich, Sergey Prokofiev, Igor Stravinsky, George Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein among others.

La Traviata, Rigoletto and *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi, and *Madama Butterfly* by Giacomo Puccini were written in Italian; *Romeo and Juliet* and *Faust* by Charles Gounod and *Carmen* by Georges Bizet were written in French; *Tristan and Isolde* by Richard Wagner and *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss, in German; *Boris Godunov* by Modest Mussorgsky and *Eugene Onegin* by Peter Tchaikovsky were written in Russian. There are also many great operas that were written in English. They include *Porgy and Bess* by George Gershwin, *The Great Gatsby* by John Harbison, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Lowell Liebermann, *The View from the Bridge* by William Bolcom, *Peter Grimes* by Benjamin Britten, and *Nixon in China* by John Cooledge Adams, just to name a few.

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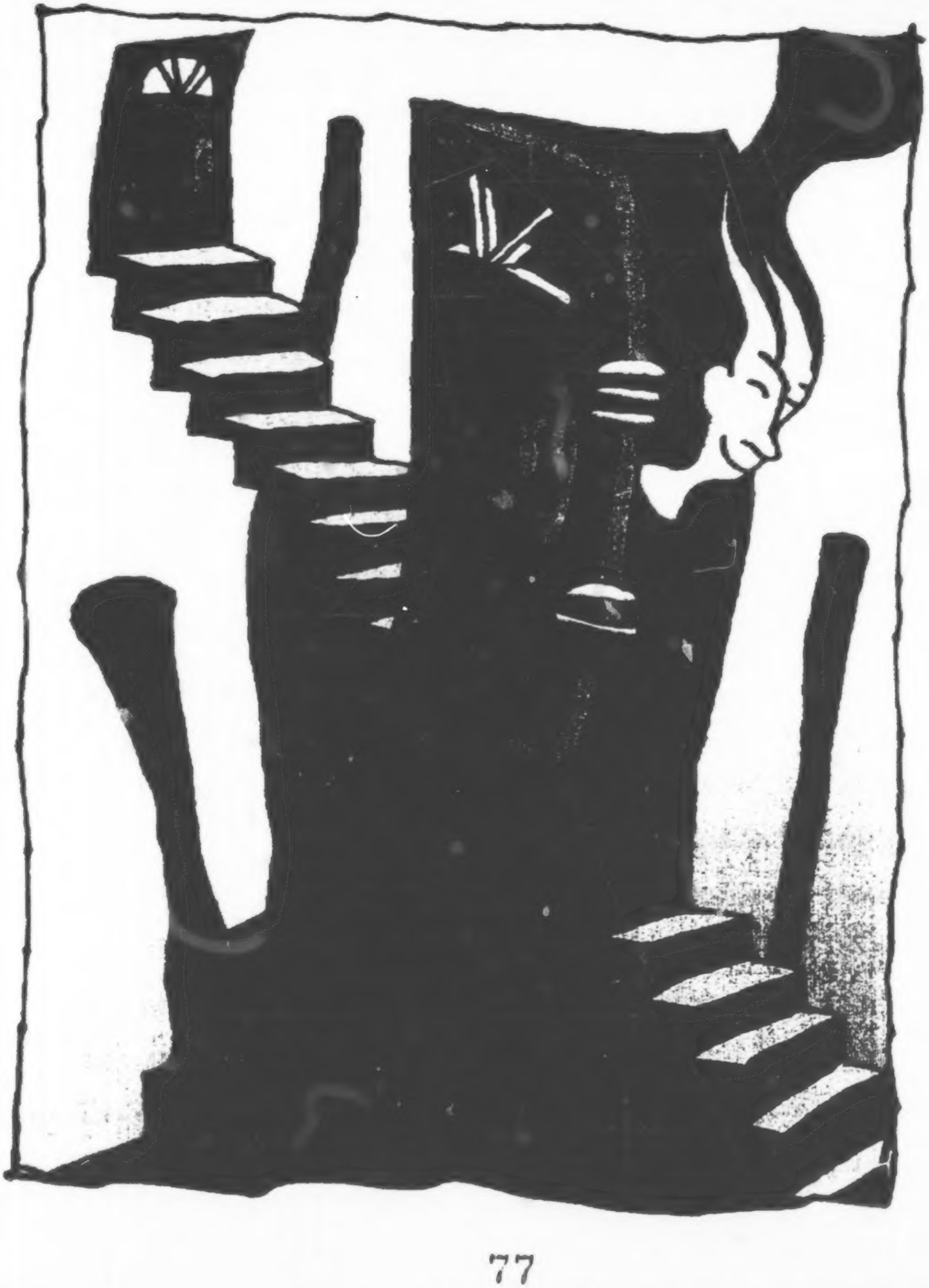

The Dress-Up Biography in ESL Reading

Denise Lagos and Susan Khodabakshi

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Background

For five to ten minutes, the students walk the walk and talk the talk of movie stars, famous politicians and other well known personalities. Dressed like their targets, the students also take on gestures, mannerisms and even try to master the tones of voice; and sometimes the singing styles of a Broadway performer or recording artist. Equally important is what they say and how they phrase it. The reward for a well-done performance is not a chocolate cake and the hooting of fellow party-goers, but a well-deserved "A" and the modulated but appreciative applause of classmates.

There is careful method behind this seemingly carefree experience–weeks of preparation centered in reading, watching scenes from television and films, and the close listening to audiotapes and recordings. Students have responded enthusiastically over the years to this dress-up biography. On completion of the presentations, students have shared their positive feedback with the instructor. For example, a Haitian student, Meran-ncie Dorcely, portrayed Maya Angelou. This is what she had to say about the project:

Student Reactions

> *The dress-up biography was a very exciting and learning experience. The freedom is that you could be someone you consider a role model. On that day, I felt that I was Maya Angelou the Second. I learned something new from everyone's presentation. I loved this assignment.*

A Turkish student, Betal Betty Korkmaz, portrayed Drew Barrymore the actress.

> *The book,* Drew Barrymore, *was the first English book I ever read. First, I read the book, and I started to watch Drew Barrymore's movies. I wanted to know what she looked like when she was a little girl. When I prepared my oral presentation, I dressed like her and acted like her. From the book, I learned a lot about alcohol and drugs. I felt so good because my last words were "Don't do drugs!" I felt that other students learned from my presentation.*

It Works with Adults

In addition to describing a general technique, this article is a detailed explanation of how an academic project associated with young children can be used successfully in an adult ESL classroom. The question to be considered here is how an educator can motivate students to read in their second language. The dress-up biography is certainly a positive motivator for reading with a purpose, while encouraging reading for pleasure. Assigning students to select an autobiography or biography of a famous person of their individual choice, whom they will portray, inspires meaningful independent reading. This improvisational activity, the dress-up biography, in which students assume a famous persona, enhances their ability to focus on the attitude and behavior of the eminent person, a skill seldom practiced in second language acquisition classes. This project is suitable, adaptable and appealing to all students in ESL reading content classes.

Theory

One of the most crucial tasks in a reading class is the transformation of adult second language learners' attitudes from indifference or active dislike to avid reading. Significant gains in reading ability often result when the adult begins to read independently, aside from class asignments. The most carefully instructor-chosen material may bring disappointing results unless the educator is able to ignite a tiny spark of interest and nurture it carefully into a clear flamboyant enthusiasm. Atwell (1987) supports the idea that ordinary pleasure reading is a large factor in reading fluency, and since pleasure reading is an individual student choice, then self-selected reading should be encouraged and supported.

The significant role of the teacher is to develop a positive attitude toward reading, and an interest in it, by creating assignments and projects that consider the students' personal needs, interests, aspirations and attitudes. Student motivation to read occurs when the teacher focuses on the students' interests, matching the material to their levels of reading ability, while displaying a high regard for reading and making the students aware of their success. A class that nurtures an interest in reading is one in which (1) the teacher shows enthusiasm for books; (2) provides an opportunity and easy access for book selection (trip to a local bookstore); (3) schedules times for student browsing, previewing/perusing, selection and reading; (4) establishes an environment for comment and discussion of books; and (5) fosters an appreciation for reading which is developed through cumulative experiences (Hickman, 1983).

The basic principles of successful work in developing reading interests have been summarized as consisting of "a lure and a ladder" approach (Betts, 1976). The lure may be considered a variety of ways of enticing students to begin pleasurable reading. The ladder involves providing suitable material that will intensify the adult's interest in reading, and an opportunity to progress gradually to more challenging reading material. The first step in the ladder is an excursion to an off-campus bookstore, which is essential for the adult reader in providing a physical surrounding favorable to reading. A community college of commuters is an ideal situation for implementation of the lure and ladder approach.

Florence Min as Hilary Clinton

College Demographics of the ESL Program

Union County College's ESL program enrolls approximately 1,500 students each semester who represent over 75 foreign countries, Puerto Rico and St. Croix. Since the program's inception in 1975, the Institute for Intensive English (IIE) program has drawn a significant number of students from Central and South America. The tradition continues with 64% of the current population originating from the Americas and the Caribbean. The IIE program consists of six levels of instruction. After placement testing, students enter one of the six levels of instruction commensurate with their abilities. In the first through fourth levels, all instruction is covered in self-contained courses. In the fifth and sixth levels, students are required to register for four concomitant courses; two core courses covering structure, listening, conversation and study skills; a reading course; and an academic writing course. The dress-up biography project is implemented at the fifth level of instruction with the advanced student in the content area reading course.

Ahmed Hassen as Anwar el-Sadat

The Assignment

The dress-up biography project is introduced to the students at the beginning of each semester as the professor discusses the reading course syllabus. It is emphasized to the students that this is a semester-long project which weighs heavily on their final course grade. The students are alerted to their scheduled excursion to an off-campus bookstore where they will purchase a biography or autobiography of their choice.

Step 1: Excursion to Off-Campus Bookstore

Early on in the semester, students are asked by the professor to meet on a scheduled class time at Barnes and Noble Bookstore, which is located in close proximity to the college. The purpose of going to the bookstore is to have the students purchase an autobiography or biography of their choice for their dress-up biography. Additionally, the objective of this excursion is to acquaint the second language learner to an environment of books. Oftentimes, the students admit that they have never visited a bookstore, other than the college bookstore where they are compelled to go to purchase their required textbooks. Before going to Barnes and Noble, the professor explains in detail the dress-up biography project. A handout (See Appendix A) is given to the students that identifies which areas of the well-known person's life should be included in their presentation. The handout also helps to alert the students to focus on these points during the reading.

Students are asked to have one or two famous people in mind whom they would like to read about, perhaps someone they have considered an idol, a role model, or hero, someone who they admire, respect and hold in high esteem, someone whose life they simply would like to find out more about, or someone from their own native countries. Before the actual purchase of the book, students are asked to sit in a quiet place of the bookstore and begin reading five to ten pages of their prospective biographies. While reading, if the stu-

Ijaz Ahned as Leonardo DeCaprio

dents encounter many unfamiliar vocabulary words, then this is an indication that the reading level of the book they have selected is above their own reading level. Therefore, it is critical that the instructor oversee the book selection in order to avoid student independent reading on a frustration level. Ultimately, the professor must approve the selection of the students' biographies before their purchases. The comfortableness of the reading level is extremely important because the students are reading their biographies independently. Oftentimes, visiting the bookstore, for many of our ESL students, is a first time experience, and, therefore, has proven to be worthwhile, productive, as well as pleasurable.

After having spent many weeks working on their impersonations of well-known people, students await their turn for presentations to class members.

Step 2: Student Preparation/Objectives

The professor discusses in detail the objectives of the dress-up biography and their importance to language learning. The following educational objectives are explained:

A. To encourage reading, especially for pleasure
B. To practice aural (listening) and oral (speaking) skills
C. To improve self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-esteem
D. To practice correct pronunciation
E. To become knowledgeable of prominent people—sharing factual information
F. To encourage creativity, uniqueness, and innovativeness
G. To promote literal, interpretive, applied, and critical thinking

After class discussion of the objectives, further specific guidelines of preparing for the presentation are discussed at length: attire (costuming), assuming the role of the famous persona; projecting the voice, while imitating indicative gestures and mannerisms, and role playing talents (singing and dancing) where applicable. The instructor specifies the importance of authenticity of students' portrayals of the characters, stressing that the students need to make their audience believe that they actually are seeing the person before them.

Further class explanation is given to the students of the components of the presentation: introduction, body and conclusion, which include factual information of the well-known character's entire life. (See Appendix A) If the students' biographies do not have current information on the person's life, then it is the student's responsibility to further investigate in other sources, seeking more updated information. If the famous person has recently passed away, then once again the student needs further inquiry in other sources. Tapping students' schema and furnishing them with background knowledge early on is extremely essential in aiding the students to carry through and successfully complete the project.

Ana Silva as Marie Curie

Step 3: Presentation Requirements/Evaluation Criteria

The dress-up biography presentation is expected to be five to ten minutes or more in length, followed by a class question and answer session. At the conclusion of each presentation, the audience is given the opportunity of posing questions regarding additional information of the person's life or clarification of points presented.

Students are given the dress-up biography presentation student evaluation form (See Appendix B) which the instructor will use to assess the student's performance. The teacher emphasizes not only the importance of the content of the presentation, but also the delivery of the speech. The instructor's criteria for evaluating the presentations are as follows:

Content

***Organization*:** Is there a clear introduction which draws the listeners into the speech? Is the body clearly organized with supporting information? Is the development of ideas logical and easy to follow? Does the conclusion draw the ideas together and give clear emphasis to the thesis of the speech?

***Language*:** Did the speaker use appropriate, descriptive and convincing language?

***Support of Ideas*:** Has the speaker analyzed the topic effectively? Was the content supported by research, personal experience and examples?

***Presentation of Topic*:** Did the speaker use an interesting approach?

***Conclusion*:** Did the presentation conclude with current information on the person's life?

Delivery

Vocal Skills: Was the speaker's voice expressive, easily understood and heard? Did the speaker's voice effectively express the mood and feeling of the subject's character?

Expressiveness: Did the speaker communicate the character's feelings and thoughts? Were pauses and phrasing effective?

Physical Movements: Did the speaker assume the role via posture, eye contact, facial expression? Was there effective use of movements, gestures? Did these emphasize significant points?

Effective Use of Notes: The speech should not be read. If notes are used, did the speaker use them discreetly without relying on them throughout or having them become a distraction to the audience?

Communication: Did the speaker effectively communicate the persona with the audience by making contact with them in a conversational style?

Photographs and Student Reactions

These areas of content and delivery are discussed at length in class throughout the semester. Finally, students are informed that their photographs will be taken on their presentation day, and that these photos will appear in the college's literary publication, *The Foreign Student Voice* (See Appendix C). Students are shown photographs of former presentations in previous issues. Responses to this activity follow:

Keum Fay Lim as Buddy Holly

A Haitian male, Adler Daniel, portrayed Michael Jordan:

Before I started doing it, I thought it was going to be hard, but later on it was fun. After I presented my book, I felt free as a bird. Mentally, this assignment made me feel that I could do much better in school, and it also helped me fight against shyness. I think I also learned about the character I chose. What I liked the most about it was the organization, and the freedom to choose my own book.

A student from Trinidad, Angie Paramnath, portrayed the late Latin singer Selena:

It was really cool to dress up and pretend to be someone else. The freedom of choosing our own book was really important because in this way we could pick someone we like and are comfortable impersonating. I saw a movie about Selena and listened to interviews on a tape that my friend had. While I presented, I felt good; everyone was paying attention to what I was saying. I learned about the life of Selena, and it gave me more courage to go on in front of a large group of people, and that's something I don't usually do. I really liked having the freedom to choose the book of my choice!

Sárka Tishman as Barbra Steisand

Florence Min from China portrayed Hillary Clinton:

In general, I love this assignment very much because it gave us a chance to read a biography and took seriously to prepare it. I had a chance to give a presentation in public. I could choose a book I really liked. I read the book and then wrote a summary. I practiced a few times at home in front of the mirror. After presenting, it gave me a lot of confidence and it gave me some ideas about how to do a presentation. From this assignment, I improved my reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Dhumil Sheth as Wayne Chrebet

Conclusion

Each semester, the dress-up biography project yields successful results. One of the assignment's many benefits is that it gives students control of their reading, as they form their own questions, monitor their comprehension and take notes. The sustained reading of an entire book of their choice promotes appreciation and enjoyment of reading. Freedom of choice, in addition, makes the assignment beneficial and motivational for all students. This is especially important in a typically heterogeneous ESL class such as those at Union County College's Institute for Intensive English. Students come from over 75 native countries, speak a variety of native languages, and have different academic backgrounds. One class may contain a mixture of recent graduates of US high schools, longtime US residents returning to school, and newly arrived experienced and degreed professionals. This wide range in student backgrounds, interests, and abilities makes it difficult for the ESL instructor to find one text for everyone in the class. It is a particular challenge to motivate the increasing number of students who are fluent speakers, with a near native command of informal spoken English but whose written and academic English skills are weak. These students are frequently reluctant readers and academically low achievers who may never have previously read a complete book. Finally, to underscore the importance of the context in which reading to learn occurs, an emphasis must be placed on the three-way relationship among instructor-student-text, which is exemplified in the dress-up biography project.

APPENDIX A. DRESS-UP BIOGRAPHY PRESENTATION

1. Summary of Person's Life should include:

- Early Years
- Full name
- Date and place of birth
- Name parents, brothers, sisters, friends, or people who influenced you
- Education: Where and how long?
- Plans for the future
- Interesting experiences
- Later Years
- Married? Single? Children?
- Occupation
- Major accomplishments - Why are you famous?
- Conclusion: If alive, what are you presently doing?
  If deceased,what were the circumstances of death?

2. Points to Remember

1. Be certain to creatively dress-up exactly like your famous figure.
2. Try to imitate and mimic characteristics of your prominent person.
3. Try to include in an organized fashion major significant points of the well-known person's life. Include details as well.
4. Try to have an innovative, creative and unique presentation.
5. Your presentation should be 10-15 minutes in length.
6. Speak clearly so you are readily heard by your audience.
7. Eye contact is important. Do not read from a paper; only note cards may be referred to.
8. Posture is important. Stand up straight, do not sit or slouch. Do not hold anything in your hands. You should never be chewing on gum or candy

APPENDIX B. STUDENTS IN CHARACTER

The following photographs are of students on the grand day of presentation. These photos first appeared in *The Foreign Student Voice*, Union County College's literary publication.

Jean Betrand as Nas Escobar

Claudia Lasso as Coco Chanel

Li Liang as Anne Frank

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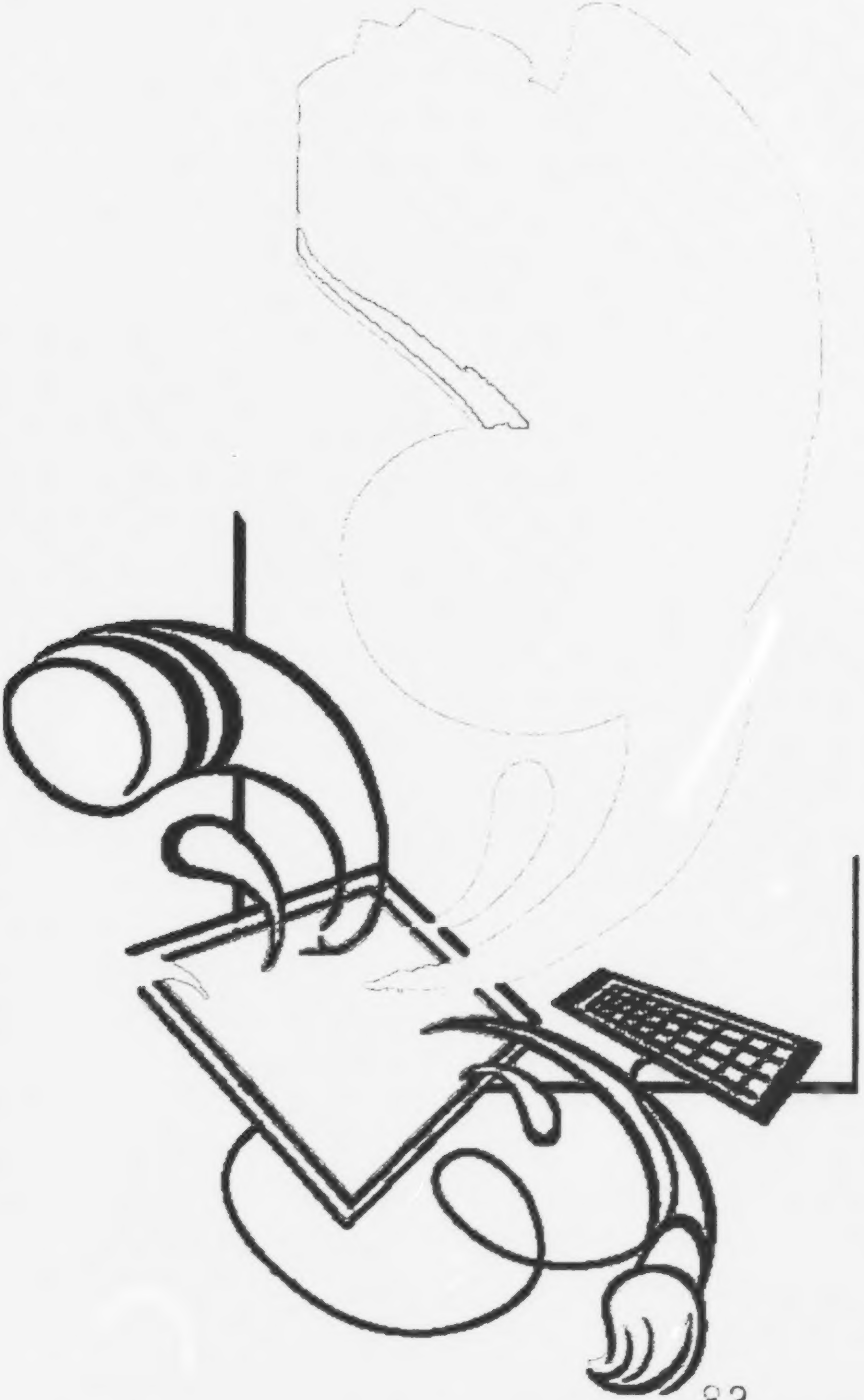

The Emotions: A Vocabulary before Language

John E. Lennon and Paul F. Barbato

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Editor's Note: *The thrust of the collection of essays* Affect in Language Learning *edited by Jane Arnold (Cambridge University Press) is that a direct link exists between the emotions and learning in general, and language learning in particular. This is close to our basic thesis in this Journal that "Attempts to acquire a language are significantly enhanced by the presence of an activated imagination." It seems that the word "imagination" refers to a cognitive faculty that is concerned mainly with integrating affect and analysis. In keeping with this metaphor, we might suggest that analysis provides the fragments of deconstructed concepts that the imagination can re-integrate into new entities. This process would be ongoing: the new entities would give rise—through analysis and in time—to more new entities. At least that schematic would account for the endless articulation of new theories that are found not only in language acquisition but every corner of human existence, including the sciences which are all rooted in the perception and logic of men and women. It was Einstein who said that the faculty of imagination is central to scientific research.*

If we are to follow this line of thought, it is essential that we explore both affect—the emotions—and analysis. In the following article, Lennon and Barbato comment on ways in which play therapy is used with younger children to supplement the communication that the use of language can accomplish in older children and adults. The imagination and the emotions are central to the "play" these authors refer to. For example, they say that play therapy "may be particularly valuable in mapping feelings onto words..." In doing so, Lennon and Barbato bring attention to the mystery of what is in a word, and what is behind the enormous power of language.

This article, then, pushes us to think more about what the imagination is and what is its place in the development of children and of language. It is research like this that might alter the popular misconception that science is serious while the imagination is frivolous, and that therefore programs like art and music should be cut so that children can focus on math and biology. Einstein knew better.

Abstract

Play therapist have used puppets, role-play, and a variety of other play materials to help children express their feelings and modify their behaviors. A non-directive approach limits questioning and adult directives and is said to allow an understanding of children from their own frame of reference. However, this traditional form of play therapy may have relied too heavily on case study methodology and may have failed to systematically evaluate psychotherapeutic outcomes. Cognitive-behavioral therapists attempt to incorporate play therapy into a systematic research-based approach called cognitive-behavioral play therapy (CBPT). This approach is contrasted with the non-directive, psychodynamic approach of traditional play therapists.

Expressions through Play

Entering into a child's world sometimes requires a willingness to allow a child's thoughts and ideas to unfold in fanciful stories and meandering play, rather than through the more direct means of asking questions. Using puppets and sandcastles, bits of wood and pieces of cloth, child psychologists have helped children become actively engaged in funny, sad and sometimes deeply emotional monologues and dialogues that provide a window on their ongoing thought processes. Child psychologists interpret the symbolic meaning in a child's play in order to shed light on the feelings and events that children may be unable to talk about in a direct manner. Play is a natural outlet for the expression of thoughts and feelings for children (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). We may recall play-acting the imaginary roles of classic children's tales and childhood conflicts played with friends from our own childhood. However, play can also serve important functions within the context of a therapeutic session.

Play therapy is often used with children under nine years of age in order to encourage the expression of their thoughts and feelings (Garbarino et. al., 1992). Young children's stories often wander from topic to topic and rarely go from "Point A" to "Point B" in a logical manner. Further, it is often difficult for a child therapist to approach problem areas directly because young children lack the reflective understanding necessary to analyze and resolve problems in interpersonal relationships (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). In play therapy children are encouraged to "act out" these relationships by doing such things as using puppets to play various roles (Van Ornum & Mordock, 1991). "Acting out" is a psychodynamic concept that refers to the expression of internal energy in the form of observable behavior. Play in the context of a therapeutic session allows the therapist to better understand children's feelings by encouraging and observing their actions in imaginary relationships and other play situations.

Therapists and Children's Play

Interacting with children through play is a practice widely used by experienced classroom teachers. In our own experience, we have seen a child-size replica of an Iroquois "long house" help second grade students imagine the lives of native Americans. We have also seen physics teachers encourage high school students to construct and play with robots in order to teach basic concepts. The excitement of play stimulates imagination and thinking and helps to generate enthusiasm and learning. Therapists also enter into the natural world of children's play in order to meet the child on their own terms and in order to share ideas and feelings .

The following paragraphs will describe the use of play therapy in understanding the thoughts and language of young children and also provide a sampling of the techniques and procedures used to facilitate communication in play therapy. The internal and external validity of the use of play therapy will be examined through a brief review of the child psychotherapy literature. Finally, the theoretical rationale for the cognitive-behavioral approach to play therapy (CBPT) will be examined and contrasted with the non-directive, psychodynamic approach.

Thoughts More Magical Than Logical

Direct question may not produce direct responses from children. Children may not be able to answer questions directly because of the limits imposed by their stage of cognitive development and the relative paucity of words in their personal lexicon to describe feelings and events. Children in the four to six-year-old range are in the pre-operational stage of cognitive functioning (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). Their thoughts are said to be more magical than logical. They may believe that the moon is "following" them and may have difficulty distinguishing dreams from reality. So it may be difficult to engage in inquiry with young children using direct questions. The language of children, particularly young children, may not be adequate to express what they really know and feel. An adult's lack of understanding about how a young child thinks may cause confusion in an adult-child conversation.

Additionally, children may not be able to express themselves because of certain emotional constraints. Parents are often shocked to see a child playing, seemingly blissfully, at times of severe emotional distress, such as the loss of a close family member. However, it is natural for the child who is overwhelmed by emotion to dissociate him or herself from a distressful event. Play allows an emotional respite. Children put off, or repress, what they cannot handle and this process serves as a protective mechanism. However, within the context of play therapy, children can also explore distressing feelings in the safety and security of the play therapy room. With the benign collaboration of the play therapist, children explore their feelings and anxieties by telling fanciful stories using puppets or by acting out family dramas with the dollhouse. Play, then, can be used as an important tool for assessing a child's cognitive and social development. When talking with children, the non-directive child psychologist does so from the child's frame of reference in order to better understand their underlying feelings and emotions (Van Ornum & Mordock, 1991). This approach allows children the time and space to express themselves through active play.

Metaphors Provide a Safe Distance

Through symbolic play, children can express ideas and feelings that would ordinarily be taboo. Distancing from the moment affords a feeling of safety and allows the child to "play out" problematic material more easily (Garbarino et. al., 1992). For example, a sexually abused child might begin to explore power and control issues in a relationship by being a "sheriff who locks up the bad guys." Some therapists may actively participate in play acting, perhaps by taking the submissive role. As the session progresses, the therapist might possibly verbalize reflected feelings of powerlessness in the role, e.g., "It's scary to sit in the cell with no way of getting out!" These words, if accurate in reflecting the child's feelings, give voice to the sensation of powerlessness, thus taking tentative steps toward deepening the understanding of the child's own feelings. In their play, children use metaphors to distance themselves from the content and the characters being enacted. For example, a child can tell a fanciful story about a lost kitten to express his/her own fears of abandonment. Play therapy, then, can be used to gain access to material that is too stressful to deal with directly and allows children to express themselves at their own pace and in their own time (Garbarino et. al., 1992).

Paul Barbato uses a hand-puppet with youngsters of generally the same age range as those discussed in the article.

Virginia Axline's seminal work, *Dibs: In Search of Self* (1964) documented the use of play therapy with an emotionally disturbed child. Axline took a reflective approach based on the "here and now" experiences, but also used the psychodynamic context to develop an understanding of symbolic play. The reflective approach was more similar to the then innovative style of Carl Rogers, encouraging active listening, rather than a more passive stance of psychoanalysis. However, Axline drew upon the more traditional concepts of psychoanalysis to interpret children's play. Current play therapists' interpretation of symbolic play may come from such sources as a reflective understanding of his and her own experiences, familiarity with children's literature and fairy tales, and a familiarity with psychodynamic theories. This non-directive psychodynamic approach takes the direction of the therapy from the child. (Later in this paper, CBPT—a more directive approach—will be described in which the therapist has a clear goal in mind and actively directs the child's play.)

Non-Directive Therapy

By taking a non-directive point of view, the therapist tries to ensure that the play will be child-centered; i.e., will flow from their own experiences, rather than be directed by the therapist (Schaefer & Cangelosi, 1993). This is markedly different from typical adult-child communications. Youniss (1980) found that most adult-child communications are unilateral exchanges. Children listen to and seek help from adults, while adults direct children's actions. In fact, children come to expect these unilateral communications. For example, when asked how they are "kind" to adults, children say they are kind by "listening to and obeying adults" and adults are kind to children by "giving them things" (Youniss, 1980). However, parents, teachers and therapists have also long recognized the value of encouraging to discover new ideas "on their own," i.e., with minimal direction from the adult. For example, experienced teachers might typically direct the learning activities of students, but also, at times, chose to serve as benign collaborators in order to encourage discovery learning through active, independent exploration. Discovery learning is a key component of educational theories influenced by Piaget, such as the Montessori method.

Non-directive therapists also strive to overcome typical adult-child communication patterns by not directing the activity of the child, but by following the child's lead in the playroom. The intent is to encourage the child to not simply wait for direction from the adult, but to begin to recognize that the playroom is a place of discovery and independent exploration. The therapist then is also serving as a benign collaborator, providing a safe and secure place and a warm, positive interest in the child's activities. Additionally, the opportunities available in the one-to-one interaction with the child allows the child therapist to spend the time required to allow a gradual unfolding of the child's inner thoughts and feelings. Rather than seeking self-disclosure, *per se*, the therapist seeks to provide a trusted presence, resolution of feelings and template for future experiences, as noted below.

Play: A Symbolic Language with a Vocabulary of Emotions

Play can serve as a symbolic language for self-expression. The "child's play is his talk, and the toys are his words" (Ginott, 1961, p.29). In this view, play activity is thought to be the natural way for children to show how they feel about themselves and the important people and events in their lives. Inhelder and Piaget (1954) note that the projection of one's thoughts, feelings, and conflicts onto play characters provides an immediate tension release. This emotional release is thought to resolve emotional conflicts.

For example, some children have a fear of relationships that effectively sabotages their opportunities for productive interactions with others. These children learn to protect themselves from this fear by pushing people away through aggressive behavior. When such children enter play therapy, the therapist attempts to offer choices and encourages independent activity, while providing warmth, positive regard and understanding. If rapport is established within an individual relationship, the child becomes involved in a very complex and personal learning experience that may serve as a template for future relationships (Jennings, 1999). Children use the medium of play to produce a symbolic neutralization of fears, liquidation of conflicts, and corrections of reality (Schaefer & O'Connor, 1983). They begin to learn a vocabulary of emotions that aids in self-expression.

For example, a child may invent, and then obsess about, a super-hero figure as an emotional replacement for an absent father, a linkage of which the child is unaware. The therapist might hypothesize about the existence of a link between father absence and this powerful fantasy figure, but also recognizes the substitution may be an important part of the child's coping mechanisms. So the therapist carefully and tentatively explores the ongoing flow of the child's day-to-day experiences and the fantasy images, perhaps drawing the child's attention to the times when the super-hero figure becomes particularly important in the child's life. While a direct understanding of this link is unlikely, the child may come to understand that fantasizing about the super-hero figure helps him or her to feel better, thus providing the child with greater understanding of the coping mechanism.

Building the Child's Personal Lexicon

Children may not be able to attach verbal labels to the unhappiness they feel. Helping them to separate feelings of frustration from feelings of anger, and feelings of disappointment from loneliness aids in the process of getting a handle on being vulnerable and out of control. Together, the child and the therapist begin to build the child's personal lexicon of names for emotions. Many therapists draw on a popular poster, which matches assorted facial expressions and a range of emotions. Eventually the child may be able to talk directly with the play therapist about the "ups and downs" of their day-to-day existence and work toward resolution and ego integration. In this way, troubled children begin to establish appropriate boundaries in their life.

Child psychologists often use puppets as a medium of communication with children. Elementary school counselors assist children in expressing feelings, re-enacting events, and modifying behavior by using puppets. Classroom guidance programs for primary level school children have included puppets as part of their presentations to interpersonal skills (Campbell, 1993). Kemple (1994) also notes the wide use of puppets in preschool settings. Puppets are thought to provide an outlet for fears and anxieties and are widely used in a variety of clinical settings. Non-directive, psychodynamic play therapists use puppets to help children transfer their feelings onto an inanimate object in order to deal with uncomfortable feelings.

The most frequently used puppets in play therapy are glove and finger puppets (Jennings, 1999). Finger puppets are easy for small fingers to handle. A child can support a whole family on the fingers of one hand and share with a therapist their perceptions of familial relationships.

A New Sense of Self

Additionally, dramatic play materials are used to stimulate imagination, allowing the play therapist the opportunity to observe the child's verbal and nonverbal behavior and thinking and decision-making processes (Irwin & Rubin, 1976). Tape recorders, play telephones, costumes, and drawing materials enhance and promote communication with a child. These therapeutic props encourage the child to begin to use their imagination and enter into role-play. While in a role, the child can enact a personal vignette or replay a universal theme, such as the fear of abandonment or sibling rivalry. Children sometimes draw on the themes of children literature and fairy tales. In the play room, they can become the "wicked queen who rules the forest." Imaginary roles help children to overcome their anxieties and experience a sense of power and control in their lives. These vicarious experiences can serve as the basis of a new sense of self.

Storytelling and reflection are often used within the context of non-directive play therapy (Jennings, 1999). The therapist and child may engage in mutual storytelling, in which one starts the story and the other enhances and embellishes the story line. While story-telling is often an important and typical component of a literate classroom, the play therapist has the advantage of extended, regularly scheduled one-to-one interaction, unique and special time for the child. The reciprocal interaction of the story-telling is based on a reflective understanding of the child's current emotional state, gained through empathic responding. This reflective understanding is "co-constructed", i.e., based on a mutual understanding and collaboration between the child and therapist. The therapist tries to help the child construct a story that builds on feelings and thoughts of which the child may be only vaguely aware. Here the therapist treads carefully to avoid constructing "false memories" or overtly influencing the child. However, just as an adult might gradually deepen their understanding of a relationship by "talking about it," the child may improve their understanding by "playing about it."

Materials in the play therapy room may include clay, sand and water tables, toy furniture, doll houses, doctor kits, dart guns, and over-sized clothing. Toys are matched to the levels of developmental functioning of the child (Schaefer & Cangelosi, 1993). Specific materials may be selected to encourage the exploration of conflicts and relationships, such as the use of finger puppets to explore the child's concern about divorcing parents. However, the use of toys as a medium of communication with children also has certain limitations. The child may see the therapist's attempts at engaging the child through play as "silly". Some children are reticent about engaging in dramatic play as a therapeutic intervention because of their natural inclination toward shyness. The interpretation of the play is subject to the biases and preconceptions of the therapist. Recent examinations in the field of child therapy raise issues of validity regarding the technique.

Validity Issues in Play Therapy

Durlak et. al. (1995) reviewed extant studies (376 published reports and approximately 670 unpublished dissertations) in order to evaluate the validity issues in child psychotherapy. Validity is a broad construct in psychology that refers to whether an assessment actually measures what it purports to measure or whether an intervention has the effect or outcome that it was intended to have. As Cicchetti & Toth (1992) have observed, many child psychotherapies are not theory-based, nor firmly rooted in developmental principles. Psychotherapies that are downward extensions of adult-oriented approaches neglect the importance of constraints imposed by a child's level of language development and cognitive understanding.

The difficulties of conducting validity studies in this area were found to be significant. Indeed, Durlak et. al (1995) noted outcome studies regarding the effectiveness of child psychotherapy generally use quasi-experimental designs (non-random assignment) rather than true experimental designs. Random assignment helps to protect against sources of error variance such as selection bias or placebo effects. The few studies that focused on play therapy in particular were found to be no exception to the general trend in this area. Thus, while play therapy attempts to deal with validity issues by incorporating developmental considerations in the delivery of the interventions, more extensive experimental data on the effectiveness of this approach is needed.

Finally, because many children in research studies were recruited from the general population, they may not be representative of actual clinical inpatient or outpatient populations. Durlak et. al. (1995) suggests that child psychotherapy research would be strengthened by greater use of normative outcome measures, by assessing the general as well as the specific impact of treatment, by using attention-placebo controls, and by collecting follow-up data.

Cognitive-Behavioral Approach

Recently cognitive-behavioral therapists have attempted to incorporate play therapy into a systematic research-based approach. In this approach, "cognitions" (thoughts) and the child's behavior are the subject of assessment and analysis. Rather than "following the child's lead" as non-directive therapists do, cognitive behavioral therapists take an active, directive role. "Positive self-statements," such as "I'm able and willing to try," are encouraged and concomitant "negative self-statements," such as "I don't have the capability," are discouraged. Cognitive behavioral theory is a goal-oriented and attempts to correct unproductive behaviors and thoughts. Cognitive-behavioral therapists typically use direct inquiry, behavioral observations and data collection to determine the parameters of the problem areas. Cognitive-behavioral therapy relies on the empirical findings of clinical studies, rather than the case study approach of traditional play therapists. Thus, in an attempt to match therapeutic interventions to a child's developmental level, cognitive-behavioral therapists have adopted and modified play therapy in order to gain access the thoughts and behaviors of young children (Knell, 1998). While a young child may not be able to respond to a direct inquiry, such as "What is bothering you today?", this same child may be able to answer the therapist's direct inquiry when given play materials. The therapist may also use play materials to demonstrate a new social skill and encourage the child to practice this social skill in the context of a role play situation using puppets. Thus, while maintaining an active and directive role, the CBPT therapist incorporate a recognition the child's developmental level and uses the materials of play therapy to foster communication and understanding.

The additions of cognitive-behavioral techniques to play intervention (CBPT) offer a new direction for both cognitive-behavioral and play therapies. For inquiry and intervention to be effective, both must be presented to the child in a developmentally appropriate manner. In CBPT, puppets and stuffed animals can be used to model new ways of thinking and talking. Cognitive strategies may include "countering maladaptive beliefs," such as the belief that you should hit and intimidate other children in order to protect yourself from harm. The therapist might work through several role play situations using figurines and modeling in order to encourage appropriate social interactions. Additionally, the therapist might model statements, such as, "When I'm scared, I can look for my friends!" or "When I feel alone, it is better to smile than to frown!", in order to encourage the development of positive coping skills. CBPT differs from traditional play therapy approaches by relying on a therapist-directed interventions, rather than using the traditional non-directive approach. CBPT attempts to graft the developmentally appropriate aspects of play therapy onto a goal-oriented, structured approach.

For example, Knell (1998) analyzed the interactions between a therapist and a girl (4 years, 9 months) who was experiencing separation anxiety. The therapist, through the voice of the puppet, modeled adaptive coping skills for the child, and as therapy progressed, the child began to incorporate these skills into her stories, her puppet play, and eventually her own coping behavior at school. So the puppets can be used to say such things as "When I have a hard time in school, I can ask the teacher for help." Or "I wish the other kids would stop teasing me, but I can talk about it with my mom." After listening to the therapist make such statements through the puppet, the child is encouraged to practice problem-solving through the puppets. This is followed by efforts to generalize the problem-solving approach and help the child apply these skills to day-today experiences.

Puppets have also been used to help new entrants to a school adjust to their new environment (Dempsie, 1997). Children who fear entering a new school participate in puppet shows conducted by teachers with the intention of helping them to understand that their fears are shared by others. The children and teachers then work on developing successful adjustment strategies. One advantage of the CBPT approach is the specification of goals and objectives by the therapist, which readily leads to program evaluation. By contrast, the Rogerian and psychodynamic approaches do not lead to outcome evaluation as easily, because such goals as "improved self-esteem" and "increased understanding" are difficult to quantify and measure. On the other hand, as noted in the previous example, using puppets to improve the child's adjustment to school is a more specific goal and, as such, is more easily measured. Such clear and focused goals lends themselves to descriptions of "how to" use the intervention and "how to" replicate the program with different populations. Because CBPT programs with clear, focused goals lend themselves to outcome evaluation, such programs are likely to demonstrate their efficacy over non-directive methods.

Comparison of CBPT and Non-Directive Play Therapy

With an increased emphasis on outcome evaluations, CBPT methods are likely to continue to gain ascendance over more traditional approaches. However, one would not want to overlook the benefits of traditional methods, just because this approach is not easily quantified. CBPT employs play therapy techniques to directly resolve behavioral, emotional and adjustment problems. In contrast to non-directive models of play therapy, the therapist uses modeling techniques and offers suggestions to help resolve the problem the child is experiencing. CBPT lends itself more readily to evaluation because of its clear focus and identifiable objectives.

Non-directive, psychodynamic approaches attempt to explore the child's world without offering directives or engage in direct questioning. The goal is to establish sufficient rapport to allow the expression of emotions and conflicts that were previously hidden. This release and insight is seen as an end in itself, and at the core of psychotherapeutic change. However, the non-directive and psychodynamic approaches have been criticized for failing to examine outcomes in a systematic manner. As an alternative to the non-directive approach, CBPT, then, provides a therapist-directed approach that lends itself more readily to outcome evaluations by emphasizing on structured sessions and therapeutic goal setting.

However, as noted above, one should not overlook the advantage of traditional methods at the expense of emphasis on quantitative methods. As presented through "case study" or qualitative methods, Axline (1964) and others suggest that a child-centered model allows the free expression of inner feelings and conflicts that would not be available in the typical adult-child interactions. As noted above, Youniss (1980) characterized typical adult-child interactions as unilateral and unidirectional. Children see themselves as listening to and taking orders from adults, rather than sharing their thoughts and feelings. Non-directive therapists attempt to overcome the unidirectional nature of typical adult-child relations by encouraging the child to take the lead in their interaction.

Therefore, in adopting play therapy, but by maintaining a directive (or unilateral) focus, CBPT risks losing the chief advantage of the child-centered approach–reciprocal interactions between adult and child. The traditional model allows the child to lead and set the direction for the content of the sessions, but this does not lend itself to program evaluation as well as short-term, solution-focused therapy does. The directive approach of CBPT, relying on modeling and problem solving, may lose the bi-directional, reciprocal interactions, generated by the children's stories and conversations. The dilemma, then, is balancing the value of reciprocal interactions with solution-focused interventions.

Conclusion

A fine-grained analysis of children's language within the context of therapy sessions may provide a clearer understanding of the relative benefit of unilateral, or directive communication, and bilateral, or reciprocal communication, with children. It is likely that both approaches may have beneficial effects. The non-directive approach may be particularly valuable in mapping feelings onto words and in helping children understand the meaning in their actions in play, while CBPT is likely to be particularly helpful in modeling appropriate problem-solving thinking in order to improve interpersonal relations.

In clinical practice, play therapists may actually use a mixed model. Non-directive approaches would seem particularly appropriate at the beginning of the therapy to encourage the expression of feelings. However, as the therapy progresses or comes to a close, the therapist might become more directive in order to build skills. Practitioners are notably eclectic in their use of psychotherapeutic theories. Thus, research evaluation of a mixed model may be particularly helpful to practitioners' understanding of the process of change and growth in children's thinking.

Finally, this paper has forwarded the notion that play is part of the natural language of childhood and has attempted to describe how child therapists enter into the world of child's play to help children talk about feelings. However, while intuitively appealing, research concerning this approach is often methodologically flawed and quite limited. Practitioners should be encouraged to build evaluation components into their work with children. Recently available meta-analysis techniques for data reduction may help to answer questions about the effectiveness of various methods of psychotherapy

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Choice + Interest = Enthusiasm for the Target Language

Greg Briscoe

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Introduction

This article deals with increasing individual expression as a means of motivation in language learning. The main point behind this approach is that expanding the opportunity for students to express personal interests and experience makes the target language more meaningful, and improves their affective reaction to it. This in turn results in increased confidence and lower anxiety. Through discussion and several examples, I will show how giving students greater freedom of choice in a variety of contexts makes them more involved, and gives them a sense of validation, increasing their interest.

The Importance of Choice

It is very important that we give students the freedom to choose what they want to talk about whenever possible. An activity that involves choice is one I call "Lost Luggage." It deals with clothing and related vocabulary, and consists of a role-play situation with a problem to solve. The activity begins by asking students to pretend that while traveling to a Spanish-speaking country, all their luggage and clothing are lost by the airline. It could be several days or even weeks until they receive their belongings. Therefore, they must buy a completely new wardrobe. The class is asked to pretend that the classroom is a market, or shopping district in their country of destination. Volunteers are sought to be vendors for individual categories of clothing, and the remaining students must "shop" to assemble their wardrobes. When they are finished, each student is asked to hand in a completed list of what s/he has purchased. In order to be sure that the task includes a wide range of vocabulary, students are instructed that their wardrobe must include at least one item from each of several categories: footwear, pants for men and women, (and/or women's skirts and dresses), shirts, or shirts and blouses, outerwear, underwear, and accessories if desired.

Choice + Interests = Enthusiasm

Each time I have done this, it goes over very well, and I believe there are two main reasons. First, the activity requires students to use their imagination. This allows their minds to step outside of the formal classroom environment and overcome inhibitions about speaking the target language. Second, is the importance of individual choice, which opens the door for expressing individual interests. The responses that students have given me confirm the positive correlation between individual choice, the expression of personal interests (e.g. in selecting their own wardrobes), and enthusiasm for the target language. As I have moved around the class observing and chatting with students, their enjoyment in being able to express their own interests has been evident as several have "shown off" their lists. They take a distinct pleasure in the opportunity to let their personalities shine through showing their taste in clothes. I have also noticed that students seem more relaxed about using Spanish, and I have even been surprised and pleased by their eagerness to speak it! There is a distinct impression that the way they show off their choices and their enthusiasm for the language relate directly to the personal affirmation that comes from placing the expression of their interests and personalities center stage. I also emphasize choice for the students who serve as "vendors"by having them choose their own product lines, set their own prices, etc. The enthusiasm of these vendors easily matches that of the "shoppers." This has led to some earnest street-corner hawking (most notably one student crowing "¡ZA-PA-TOS!" ["Shoes for sale!"]), not to mention special offers, and complaints from student "shoppers" about "vendors" who drive too hard a bargain. All of this lends a refreshing dose of reality to the experience.

Contributing to Content

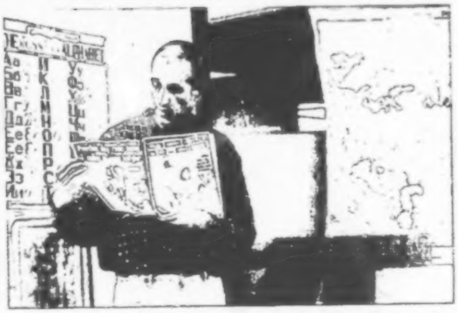
In a case such as the "Lost Luggage" activity, the choices are based on a specific, or restricted subject matter, i.e. clothing-related vocabulary. Individual choice can also be an effective motivator by giving students the opportunity to make significant contributions to content. I make a consistent effort to allow students to contribute generously to class content. I will cite two examples. The first comes from a lesson on using nouns and definite articles for making general statements in Spanish. To make a general statement about the nature of a particular noun, or state an opinion about it, a definite article must be used with the noun in Spanish. In English one says "Chocolate is good" (no article), however in Spanish, a definite article must be used with the noun: "El chocolate es bueno." While working with an advanced group of students on this concept, I wanted to make the rule more meaningful by having them see immediate relevance. I decided to ask each student to write down the three most important issues to them in their current semester and write their name on their paper. Each issue was to be expressed by a definite article and noun following the pattern in Spanish, and used in a sentence. I then collected the papers to play a game I have used several times. In the game, I select a paper and read one of the three items, without telling the class to whom the paper belongs. Next, three students are called in front of the class, including the student whose response was read, and the rest of the class is told that the item read out loud was written by one of these students. The remainder of the class then needs to figure out who actually made the statement by questioning all three of the students. Each of the students called out from the class is instructed to answer the questions in a convincing way in order to persuade their peers that s/he is the person who made the statement in question. When the class as a whole feels they have asked enough questions to know which student is telling the truth, each one votes for the student they find most convincing. After voting, the student who actually wrote the item in question is identified. These steps can be repeated as many times as desired.

The Death of My Favorite Shoes

The interest level was noticeably high. The focus on issues important to each individual student combined with the general interest on the topic to make the class session and concept relevant, in addition to creating a great deal of intrigue. By their facial expressions and emotions, it was easy to see that they were curious to know what really mattered to one another about their experiences, in addition to finding out more about each others' personalities. Such a focus on individuality bears fruits in making students feel more comfortable in expressing their personalities as several examples show: (Original student wording is used in Spanish examples, except where errors would change the intended meaning.): "La clase de francés es un circo." (French class is a circus), "El muerto de mis zapatos favoritos es mi tristeza." (The death of my favorite shoes is my despair), "Las viajes cuando ve[o] mi novio son la motivación [del semestre]." (Trips to see my boyfriend are the motivation [behind the semester]). This is even evident in a personal twist given to answers that could be considered "predictable": "La tarea es continua." (Homework is unending), "No conozco al [el] sueño éste semestre." (Sleep is unknown to me this semester). I use this game with other topics from time to time, but have never seen a class perk up quite like this one: the student-produced content really made a difference. Each time a new set of students was called in front of the class, they were genuinely in suspense to know who was telling the truth. The content also made a difference with this particular class in their eagerness to use Spanish. I should add that some of the students' responses (including a few of these examples) were a little off the mark with respect to the use of nouns and articles in Spanish to make general statements. This is understandable given the foreignness of this rule compared to English and these students' lack of exposure to it. However, with some minor modification, I was able to adapt several answers to fit the lesson topic, and in other instances, I used the variations as reinforcing teaching opportunities.

'Aprieto' Means 'Tight Spot'

The second example is from an activity built around teaching how to say what someone would do in certain circumstances. In Spanish, this is expressed by the conditional verb tense. I was working with an intermediate class in this instance, and I again looked for a way to relate the concept to students in a way that they could create the content based on their experience and interests. I introduced a new word "aprieto", which means a "tight spot" in English, i.e. a tricky, or difficult situation to get out of. I asked each student to think of several "aprietos" and write them down. Then, they were organized in small groups, and one at a time, each student was asked to explain what s/he would do if they found themselves having to deal with one of the aprietos. For each aprieto a student responded to another student in the group was instructed to ask the first student two follow-up questions based on the original answer.



Greg Briscoe uses various kinds of realia in motivating students to share his enthusiasm for the target language.

As in the previous example, the focus on personal content was successful in generating interest and enthusiasm in the use of Spanish. This seemed most obvious from the genuineness and sense of humor in the exchanges. One student, when asked what she would do if her roommate didn't do her share in cleaning house, said she would tell her to do it, would tell her more forcefully a second time if needed, and would even throw out her clothes if they remained on the floor. There was an indignance in her voice expressed by an increased seriousness in tone with each level of additional action she said she would take. Judging by her emotional reaction, this aprieto stirred real convictions in her, something that couldn't happen if the topic didn't really matter to her. The sense of humor expressed by many students in this activity shows that they are comfortable with a prominent role for individuality in contributing to language learning. This follows from the logic that individuality stimulates not only interest, but gives a sense of validation to students, which corresponds to more confidence, comfort and lowered inhibitions.

There are examples of this humor in many aprietos: "Tu mejor amigo roba el banco" (Your best friend robs a bank), "Tu estás en el cuadro [un cuarto] con un mil arañas" (You're in a room with 1,000 spiders), "Tu madre es en carcel" (Your mother is in jail), and "Tienes un novio que no te quieres [Tienes un novio que no quieres]" (You have a boyfriend you're not in love with), "Recibes un corte de pelo que es muy corto" (You get a haircut that is too short), "Tu novio/novia te compra una camisa que detestas" (Your boyfriend or girlfriend buys you a shirt you can't stand). There was also an anecdotal exchange between a couple of students worth mentioning because it shows the degree of personal expression possible with an emphasis on individual contribution. While one of the two students was looking up how to say "to cry" in her dictionary so she could say what she would do if her boyfriend broke up with her, she came across a postcard of Leonardo DiCaprio and said "La pictura de mi novio" (A picture of my boyfriend). I found it interesting that she would feel comfortable bringing up a relatively personal topic, however serious or not her interest in Leonardo DiCaprio might be.

Outcomes and Ownership

There are also benefits to encouraging individual expression in giving students freedom to determine the outcomes of communicative tasks. Involving students in contributing to outcomes has a positive affect on raising interest similar to contributing to content. However, I believe it is more important that when students have the opportunity and responsibility to give closure to their communicative efforts, they acquire a sense of ownership of, and identity with the target language. Succeeding in going "full circle" lets them experience the potential the language has for self-expression. Determining the outcome is what is at the heart of the "Lost Luggage" activity (i.e. choosing your own wardrobe). Combined with the chance to create the content through their choices, this accounts for a lot of the enthusiasm the students showed. An activity I have used in an upper-division class puts students center stage as far as determining outcomes. In this activity groups of four or five students are asked to collaborate on and report the solution to a dilemma presented to them. On one occasion, a group's situation was to decide whether to take a high-paying job in an attractive environment (California), or a lower paying, but more interesting job closer to home (Kentucky). These choices, and the focus on student involvement in the outcome called upon the group to really examine their values. The students' response was thoughtful and well-reasoned, indicating that their experience was meaningful.

An important technical aspect of adopting an individualized approach is choosing subject matter that can be adapted to specific language features, that stimulates general interest, and yet inspires individuality. A useful question for identifying such topics is, "What experiences are integral or central to students' lives?" or "What matters to students?" The things that matter to them are the things that occupy their thoughts, desires, time, and energy. A short list might include: daily routine, common experiences (celebrations, social life, traditions/holidays, vacations), preferences (opinions, likes, dislikes), relationships (friends, family or acquaintances), new experiences and change, the future, the past, work, and diversions. These general sample topics appeal to diverse groups without sacrificing the potential for individual expression. At the same time, it is easy to see that they are applicable to a wide range of communicative needs and grammatical skills.

The enthusiasm and interest in these three in-class activities–(1) "Lost Luggage," (2) the game of matching students with their personal statements vis-a-vis the semester, and (3) interviews with classmates about aprietos–shows a correlation between encouraging individualization and a positive perception of the target language. Placing students' interests and experiences in a central role lets the target language become a means of self-expression, making it and the classroom more interesting because what they are all about is the students' lives. The responses of several of my students confirm this. Their comments include "I think it's better that a student gets to choose what to talk about. It's stimulating," "(It) makes class more interesting...because you're able to project your own interests or abilities into class...and kind of make it your own, in terms of getting out of it what you want." In addition to making class more interesting, one student commented that it helped her develop more advanced skills. She said: "You have to think of things on your own that you wouldn't otherwise and it gets you past the basics."

Briscoe uses a low-keyed but keen sense of humor in his classes. Here, to provide variation, he weaves the personna of a mystic with psychic powers and a statue of an extra-terrestrial

Research on Individualization

Researchers and writers in foreign language education and other fields agree on the effectiveness of increasing student contribution to input. In analyzing innate human interests and needs in *Teaching Languages: A Way and Ways* (1980), Stevick says that a language course that relates to personal goals and what is personally meaningful will be more effective. He gives an example of a language teacher who came to understand this by reflecting on her career. Looking back, she found that when she was untrained and encouraged students to express their feelings, they achieved greater language production than later on when she was motivated by a "textbook dominant" attitude, and focused on error correction as a means of speeding progress (5). Stewart (1989) summarizes the important relationship between individualization, interest, motivation, and the desire to succeed by saying: "individualization of instruction...makes it possible to meet the total spectrum of student abilities, interests, and needs...[and] thus success is within the reach of every student" (25, 26). Models in several disciplines promote the effectiveness of individualization in motivating students, for example, art (Isgro 1993), computers (Strot 1998), and science (Druger 1998).

Research also points out the soundness of an individualized approach with respect to the fundamentals of learning. This can be linked to the central role of background knowledge in an individualized classroom, and the importance of reaching out to learners with different learning styles. Concerning background knowledge, Burns and Klingstedt (1988) state that "The more the learner applies what is learned in daily living, the more likely the information or skill will become permanently learned" (418). This is confirmed by Ausubel (1968, 1978) and Omaggio (1986), among others. Johnson (1982) found a positive correlation between the presence of background knowledge and the rate of learning. I believe that the high content of *daily living* in the above-mentioned activities has a great deal to do with their popularity, by making class content both more familiar and interesting. Stewart's comment in the preceding paragraph—that individualization "makes it possible to meet the total spectrum of student *abilities, interests, and needs.*"—suggests that individualization is also effective in activating different learning styles (25) (my italics) .

Learner Confidence

The effect of individualization on learner confidence, mentioned at the outset of the article should not be overlooked. Giving a central role to individualization sends a message to students that their ideas are important in learning the target language. This can't help but strengthen their confidence in these ideas. The fact that the teacher trusts the students with a greater role will add to their confidence in a personal sense as well. One of the best examples of this that I have seen was in a first semester German class I observed taught by a colleague. She encouraged and expected student involvement in all aspects of the class, from their personal input to curriculum, to asking students for original explanations of unique meanings and grammatical concepts in German, to explanations of rules, and answering each others' questions. Her students were involved in ways I had never thought of. I don't recall ever being in a class where students were as interested in the activities, in speaking the language, and were so comfortable and eager to participate. Personal confidence and confidence in individual abilities also helps students to become more independent learners. A student commented to me that she liked contributing her own ideas because, in her own words, "It makes you think...(and it) makes you think of more words...(and) how to say things on your own".

Conclusion

As the example activities and student comments show, personal involvement is an effective motivator to interest in learning a foreign language. Putting students' ideas and experiences center stage makes the target language come alive. It increases the comfort level in the classroom which lessens the "performance anxiety" often associated with using the foreign language. The confidence of students will grow from the increased opportunity to contribute, and they will gain valuable experience in developing creativity and becoming independent learners. Research links individualization with background knowledge and different learning styles, and has demonstrated the success of applying individualization in several different fields. Adapting subject matter to course curricula should take into account choosing topics that really matter to students, yet also stimulate general interest.

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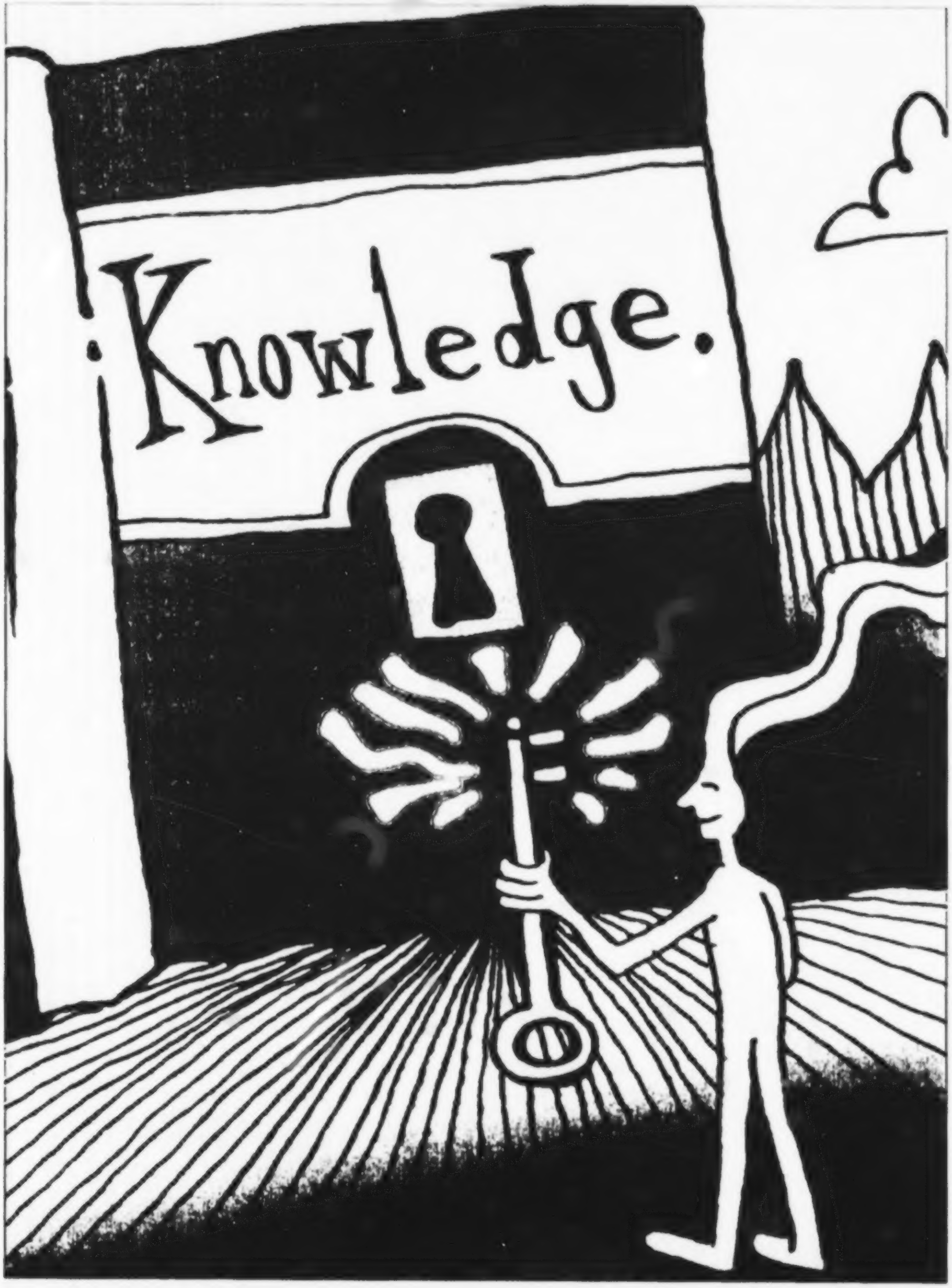
Knowledge.

Creative Language in the EFL Class: The Fun Hypothesis

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"She can write because she's bright. I'm not."

"I don't have any imagination."

"I don't know what to say."

When students say things like this–and they often do–a writing assignment can be one of the most unsettling experiences that they encounter. Of course it is as unfounded as saying, "I can't think or speak." In this article, we will consider a few simple but effective ways of "exploiting" the student's imagination to develop creative writing in the foreign language classroom. Let us first consider the reasons for the negative reactions.

Solemnity, Haste and Punctuation

First is our daily attitude to writing–the student is given to understand that writing is a solemn obligation. This has scared countless students and induced a fear of setting pen to paper lest fatal mistakes occur. To make matters worse, writing has lately been considered an extended way of testing grammar, with practically no connection to the content area the students are dealing with. This ignores the students' need to explore poetic and other forms of personal expression in the foreign language they are studying. Time–or the lack of it–is another serious constraint. How many times have we expected our students to write a wonderful piece "in the remaining fifteen minutes." Possibly even more of a straitjacket is the teacher's instruction "to write at least a hundred and fifty words on any topic that you like, such as your holidays." This unattractive load was to be executed within the strict conventions of punctuation.

A Fascinating Exploration

For years, teachers were strongly encouraged to deal with writing as a skill, or rather, as something that must be accounted for. Since those days of constraints, we have entered into a period in which everything written about has to have a communicative purpose. From one point of view, such a purpose can easily be equally heavy and stultifying. We seem to have forgotten about one of the primary reasons for writing–that it is great and fascinating fun to explore and express what is going on within us. We have also forgotten what we all have realized–that we are all different. We all need different amounts of time to solve a problem. We don't all cry at the movies, and we don't all shout when our fingers get burnt in the oven. We know these things, yet we often expect our students to write uniformly. When we do work with expressive writing, we run another risk, that of requiring students to explore various complex reactions before they have acquired enough of the foreign language to accomplish that task.

A Personal Activity

If we understand that writing is a personal activity, then the first step towards creativity has been taken. Let students use the dictionary. Watch them get angry with themselves, consult their friends, crumple up the paper, start again. See what different paces they have. Who wans to get rid of the piece? Who reflects? Who feels like showing the rest what he or she has just written? Revision, self-correction, hesitation are all central to the process of writing. Give your students short and clear instructions. Sit down and watch. Everything will start to run smoothly.

The writing class is not a time-filler or, worse still, a punishment. In the same way as football players need to warm up before they get onto the field, writing also needs some stretching, movement and press-ups. Talk it over, discuss it. Has it helped you find a good way to start? If speech has always preceded writing, why should it be different in writing class? In the last years, the concept of "successful language has become wider than accurate language" (Lewis 1993). We can make ourselves understood. Great! That's what we wanted. As was the case before, we don't have to wait for years to ask our students to write. We don't need to wait until they are "proficient in the language". (When would that day be after all?) Our students' writing competence should never be the product of grammatical competence but its basis. And errors or miscues, rather–if we go a little further towards the whole language class–should spiral themselves towards comfortability in writing.

Writing is an autonomous activity. It has got its own rules, but what we are going to concentrate on is a different way of tackling the process. Titles have so far been used and misused–why not try other resources in the classroom? We are going to suggest exploring what is next to you: phonics, context, connotation, definitions. For all this, you only need to concentrate on the word, the phrase, the name–the tools that surround us daily.

Stories from Word Banks

Have you been working on the world and space? Then, you could ask your students to write about a new cosmogony. For the initial brainstorming, they could work in groups. Then they might break up and produce a word bank. For example, one student came up the following categories: Earth, Air, Fire and Water. The class was asked to to write related terms. Using these terms made it easier to start a story.

Word Bank for Earth Air Fire Water:

ball	mountains	wash	oceans
perfect	sand clean	seas	
irregularities	grains	stagnant	rivers
	desert		

The goddess took a piece of plasticine and made a huge ball. So created she the "Earth". As she was quite stupid, the ball was not perfect. It had irregularities and her friends laughed because of that. She was very proud, too and told them that the irregularities were the "mountains".

The ball fell from her hands on sand. She did not want to make another ball because plasticine was very expensive at those times. She she washed the ball with water, but she couldn't clean it completely. Lots of grains of sand were stuck to the ball. She called them "deserts". Water became stagnant between some mountains. The goddess's brother called them "oceans, seas, and rivers."

Written by Eugenio, aged 16

The Nationality Game

The nationality game is very easy to play. Write out on cards a set of invented nationalities using recognized suffixes. The following are examples:

Oranger *Tablish* *Machinal Nalian*

Give out two in each group. Then ask students to describe the prototype of the people in each country: their habits, their laws and regulations, what the country looks like, what they themselves look like, what their interests are. Once all this has been talked about–and written if you like–ask your students to suggest a reason for these two countries to meet. The most widely acclaimed have been a conference, an invasion, trade, an international football championship, or an aristocratic wedding.

Redefining Unknown Words

The dictionary is another great resource. Playing with unknown words and redefining them imply a previous handling of the dictionary. For example:

What is a LAGAN? *What is a FATBACK?* *What is a SIMOON?*

Again, students will be playing with signifiers and associations with the help of phonemes but without the constraint of accuracy of meaning. They will probably come out with definitions that might bear no resemblance at all to the original but that might make them laugh! In the classroom, the "fatback" was reported to be "a kind of male creature with a prominent behind" [sic]. What is the connection between the dictionary explanation: "a strip of fat from the back portion of a side of a pork, cured by salting"?[1] Probably none, but its phonic shape does the trick, creating a kind of "estranged" language we can only enjoy if we step away from standard language. By the way, do you know what a *horsebit* is, or maybe an *eleraffe*? Young learners can also attempt to create and describe new animals who live in a fantastic zoo, like the *bearfly* pictured below.

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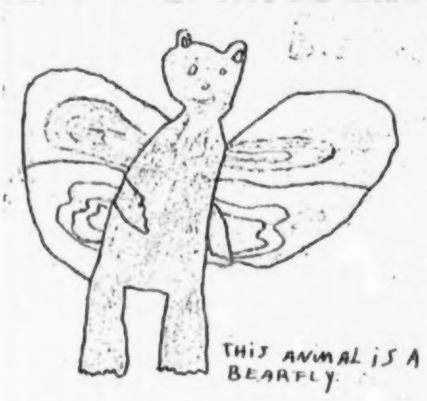
[1] New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language *(1975). New York: Consolidated Book Publishers.*


THIS ANIMAL IS A BEARFLY.

Combining words is transformed in Laura Renart's class to drawings of non-existent creatures like this cross between a bear and a fly-a "bearfly".

Horse-Race Names

The names of racing horses are a rich source of ideas. Give your class a list just as they come out in any city newspaper and ask them to include all of the names in a story. In the students' fiction, these names will become the names of people, places, shops, brands or whatever they fancy. For example:

Gure Echea
Vero Beach
Multiplicadora
Las Vegas
Pupulina
Frau Prospect
La Democratic
Ruinosa
La Nuestra

It didn't happen in Gure Echea, a place like Las Vegas but much smaller. Two men were walking on La Nuestra street. They were going to La Democratic camp situated in Vero Beach, two miles from Gure Echea. It was an Indian cemetery called Pupulina. In that cemetery were resting lots of facous people, but not so known as were Ruidosa or Multiplicadora.

Half an hour later the two men arrived to the camp. There were nobody except of Frau Prospect, the caretaker. She told them that the camp was closed and they had to go out and disappear. Frau Prospect lit her pipe and went into her dirty cottage.

The two men didn't know where to go so they began to walk without direction. The night was very dark and the couldn't see anything. At two o'clock they decided to stop because they were very tired. They didn't know that they were in the cemetery.

Some minutes later they heard a noise: a stone was moving. The men had time only to lit a match. They saw some decayed and fetid dead Indians who were walking to them. Their skulls reflected the match's light. The men felt a strong strike in their heads.

Minutes later, the Indians had a wonderful banquet.

Written by Valeria, aged 14

Titles of Imaginary Movies

Titles of imagined movies can help students write "reviews" of those movies. For example, the following phrases could trigger off colorful stories starring great actors. Adapt the titles to the age of the class and take advantage of the video information the students have been exposed to. Students are to say what was good, bad, wonderful, terrible, boring, interesting, etc. about the "movie" they choose.

"Dead and Buried" *"Heaven in Ninja Hell"* *"Lethal Attack"*

Imaginary Movie Dialogue

For this exercise, real dialog from real movies can be used, or the teacher can make up imaginary dialog from an imaginary movie and read it to the students. They then have to answer certain questions: Who's speaking? Where are they? What happened before? What will happen next? Students can be encouraged to ask and asnwer additional questions. An example of imaginary dialog follows:

A: We must talk.
B: Right, right.
A: The thing is....I've spoken to lots of people about you.
B: Oh God.
A: And everyone agrees–you're in real trouble.
B: Am I?
A: You see, you're turning into a sort of serial monogamist–one girlfriend after another. Yet you'll never really love anyone, because you never let anyone near you.
B: On the contrary.

A: You're affectionate to them, and sweet to them… You were even sweet to me although you thought I was an idiot.
B: I did not.

Fables and Superheroes

Fables and superheroes can provide you with great ideas if you use them slightly differently from the original. The first step would be to mix a "salad of characters." What would Superman say to Terminator? How would Robin Hood ask Cinderella out? Would the Lion King agree to meet Pinocchio? Here, again, the sky's the limit.

The Disrupting Word

Or why not try the "disrupting word" to write a story? Give your class a set of words that are traditionally associated with a fairy tale but with a word that is obviously out of context. For example:

Little Red Riding Hood: girl / forest / basket / wolf / Granny / helicopter

Unsettling Statement

Regard what is called the "unsettling statement," and in the same fashion, students must reconstruct the traditional story but with some changes:

Robin Hood helps the rich and gets a ticket for speeding.

Propp's Cards

The last resource I will mention is one that has given us great pieces is "Propp's Cards." Taking advantage of Vladimir Propp's functions in his classification of folk tales, your class can make up a new story. Propp isolated thirty-one functions that usually occurred in the Russian traditional tale. (There are many coincidences with the Latin American traditional soap opera.) Some of Propp's functions are listed below. For the function of "mutilation" and a context, examples might be a crippled character who, in due course, will be able to walk again. For "absence," a father who left one day and never returned. (For a complete list, consult Gianni Rodari's *Gramatica de la Fantasia*. Write the name of each function on separate cards and give four or five to each group of students. Then ask them to reorder the cards and use the new sequence as the structure of a story they are to collaborate on.

punishment delay persecution mutilation prohibition wrongdoing
mediation fight between hero and antagonist mediation absence trap

Conclusion

The above suggestions are short and need to be adjusted for the age of your students and the size of your classes. One way to proceed is to play dumb and tell the students that you saw the suggestion in a publication but don't know how to go about it. Let them use their imagination. It's a powerful tool.

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Neuro-Linguistic Programming: A Basis for Language Learning

Marion H. Love

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Editor's Note: *Neuro-Linguistic Programming or "NLP" seems to be a general approach to life, including the study and acquisition of language. During the past ten years, the wide-ranging philosophy has been quite influential in English as a second language as taught in England and in Europe in general. Yet NLP remains relatively unknown in the United States. It is to help bridge the Trans-Atlantic gap that this Journal presents the following article. Although some of the emphases in NLP do have implications for the imagination and vice- versa, we do not wish to either endorse or disagree with the contents. We will point out, however, that there seems little or no direct relationship between "Neuro-Linguistic" as referred to in NLP and "neurolinguistics" as it is studied in departments of linguistics and/or psychology in the USA.*

> *NLP is an attitude…[of]…insatiable curiosity about human beings with a methodology that leaves behind it a trail of techniques.*
>
> (Bandler and Grinder, 1979)

The presuppositions of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) are not a philosophy or a credo or a set of rules and regulations. Rather, they are assumptions upon which individuals base future actions and plan for meaningful learning experiences. For example, a teacher who instructs students to exchange homework with each other is *presupposing* that everyone has done the work. An NLP presupposition is an assumption about human behavior, experience, communication or potential that influences behavior. For many people, presuppositions are firmly held beliefs that engage the emotions as well as affect behavior. Thus, teachers–like students–usually have strongly held presuppositions about the roles of the teacher and student, the nature of learning and what constitutes progress in the classroom. NLP research and practice over the last twenty-five years confirms that *achieving* excellence is helped when we act as if we believe the presuppositions which the method promotes (Revell, NLP Trainer).

Some NLP Presuppositions

1. The map is not the territory. *[Our senses filter everything we experience.]*
2. What you believe either is true or becomes true. *[Perceptions are individual and influence behavior.]*
3. The mind and the body affect each other. *[Thought, emotions and behavior are interconnected.]*
4. Knowing what you want helps you to get it. *[Identify your goals and break them down into manageable tasks.]*
5. The meaning of your communication is the response you get. *[Communication is not your intention; it is an experiential process.]*
6. There is no failure, only feedback. *[Stop blaming yourself if something isn't working. Try something else!]*
7. Communication is verbal and non-verbal. *[You are always sending and receiving messages.]*
8. Modeling excellent behavior leads to excellence. *[Find the model and follow the pattern.]*
9. There is a positive intention behind every behavior. *[People respond in the only way they know how at the time.]*

In applying NLP presuppositions to the classroom, teachers first must look to their own perceptual models regarding the nature of learning and student performance. Central issues involve identifying individual behavioral and communicative patterns which contribute to learning or which may be impacting learners negatively. Assisting a student to make positive changes for learning as well as living, requires teachers to recognize personal strengths and weaknesses and to challenge limitations as they program themselves as models of excellence for the students. Teachers who can foster a classroom laboratory environment where NLP presuppositions are actively practiced enable students to develop creative self confidence as they approach learning tasks and life tasks. A student matures wisely and can become a life-long learner who begins to understand that "anything can be learned if it is chunked properly." A student relates more effectively with teachers and peers when recognizing that "communication is an on-going verbal and non-verbal process." A student develops leadership ability and self-esteem when solving problems with "many—rather than a few—choices." A student appreciates diversity when recognizing that "the map is not the territory." Percepetual models imposed by a culture, or a society, or one individual are challenged by teachers who can model these NLP presuppositions in the classroom behavior while teaching students to consciously use them.

Identifying Trouble Spots in the Classroom

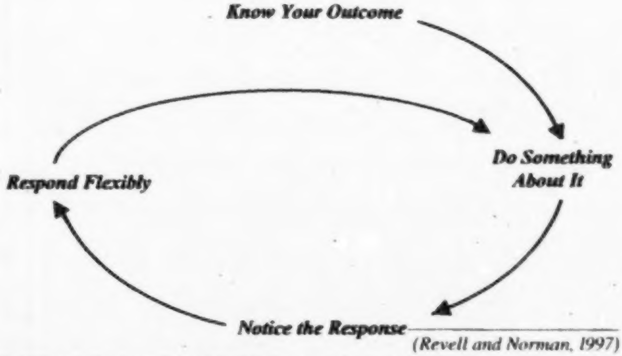
While business professionals and therapists have been working with NLP since the 1980's, educators in the US have been slow to embrace the attitude, as Bandler calls it, for the classroom. Perhaps one reason is that many NLP techniques overlap with more familiar ones such as accelerated and affective learning strategies. It is possible that teachers, unfamiliar with what makes NLP a unique method, mistakenly assume that they already know all they need to know about the field. What is it that makes NLP a tool for the 21st century classroom? It is fast and easy to apply. It helps teachers and students to identify trouble spots quickly. For example, students who exhibit behavioral patterns such as forgetfulness or hyperactivity are frequently diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). While medication—Ritalin in particular—is prescribed as a temporary or long-term solution for some children, NLP can provide an alternative approach. Learning how to anchor a strong sensory impression and then link it with an internal image helps a forgetful learner to remember. Knowing how to control the intensity and speed of images can relieve internal pressures which hyperactive learners experience and then express through external excitability.

The Student's Perspective

NLP training also shows students how to identify outcomes and then test them for viability. Chunking up (enlarging) and chunking down (detailing) a task or a goal using guided imagery teaches students how to sequence learning into achievable units. Subsequently, self-knowledge and confidence develop as students learn how to read the road maps of their experience and how to deal with the internal dialogues and emotional reactions which result in behavior and concepts of self-worth. Significantly, NLP's "trail of techniques" can show students how to confront personal fears and angers, freeing them from ego-agenda traps which restrict poetntial. Getting the students to adopt such attitudes is not as difficult as it might seem. NLP's Basic Action Model (BAM) of NLP is a fundamental technique for learners to understand the process of communication and to practice behavioral strategies for meeting goals while relating effectively with others. Through role plays and problem solving exercises, teachers can provide their students with an important NLP concept:

The Basic Action Model

The Basic Action model is simple for students to understand and for the most part self-evident. The problem in using it, however, is that understanding does not necessarily lead to practice. Consequently, many different NLP techniques have been developed which allow a practitioner to explore goal setting or sensory acuity or communicative flexibility. For example, students who can quickly and easily learn to use many NLP exercises use "Life



(Revell and Norman, 1997)

Levels" to check on the desirability of a specific outcome by viewing it from the perspectives (or levels) of students' individual resources and behavior, personal beliefs and values and, ultimately, their identity and mission. Another example is the "Walt Disney" strategy which helps students to problem-solve an outcome by having them shift perceptual states from dreamer to realist to critic as they explore how creative ideas become successfully realized. A third technique is "Swish", a fast phobia-cure which requires students to substitute positive mental imagery or positive sounds for negative ones which restrict or limit behavior.

These and other NLP exercises make it possible for students to become self-directed and and self-confident learners primarily because they start to assume more responsibility for the communicative and behavioral decisions they make in their lives. That means students learn to recognize and acknowledge that they create their own belief system and act accordingly. NLP models require those who use the strategies to live more honestly, without blaming others for what is happening to them. It does no good to blame others for interpersonal situations that are uncomfortable or for goals that are unmet. NLP reminds learners "if you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got." NLP then invites learners to take charge of our own lives.

Peruvian ESL students in role play, an important part of the NLP approach.

Oh To Be an Eagle

Oh to be an eagle
And swoop down from a peak
With the golden sunlight flashing
From the fierce hook of my beak.
'Oh to be an eagle
And to terrify the sky
With the beat of wings like thunder
And a wild, barbaric cry.
'Oh to be an eagle...but why keep dreaming?
I must learn to be myself,'
Said the rubber duckling sadly
On its soapy bathroom shelf.
Richard Edwards

Like the rubber duckling of the poem, many students have dreams of flying high. When children, they play at make-believe and invite others to "let's pretend." As adolescents, they imagine what it would be like to star in a movie of their life story. They try out various roles: "Rocky," "Indiana Jones," or, perhaps, "Shakespeare"–in love. As college students, they explore majors based on what they'd like to "be" rather than "do." And so it goes throughout life. For many students, the dreams fail and, borrowing a phrase from Langston Hughes poem "Harlem," wither and "dry up like a raisin in the sun" (Barnet, 1989). If schools can help students to believe that they are works in progress, then we can empower them. Their futures are not determined and their identities are not fixed. As this article is suggesting, NLP can be a tool for the 21st century classroom to help students re-create themselves. NLP can make a difference in a life that makes a difference.

Come to the Edge

"Come to the edge!"
"Tis too high!"
"Come to the edge!"
"We might fall!"
"Come to the edge!"
So they came to the edge and
He pushed them and
THEY FLEW!
Guillaume Apollinaire

What Makes the Difference: Background

At the University of California, Santa Cruz, in the early 1970's, linguistics professor John Grinder and mathematician-computer programmer Richard Bandler were exploring the nature and science of human excellence. In particular they were investigating *the difference that makes the difference* between someone who excels and someone who does not. They wondered, for example, why one individual was able to remain positive in spite of great difficulties, while another was crushed by small setbacks. They questioned why some people had a facility for building and maintaining relationships, while others failed to establish rapport. They were curious about the distinctive linguistic patterns and non-verbal messages individuals used in comparable interpersonal situations. What made the difference between a superior performance and an inferior one? What were the factors in language patterns, physiology, the experience of reality and the interpretation of that experience which contributed to success or imposed limitations?

Metaphors for a Change

NLP is a methodology for managing rapid and positive change. It is a methodology, some say "an attitude," that could prove especially useful for the classroom, enabling teachers to become more successful communicators and empowering students to process for excellence. It is a blueprint for educators to share with students as they learn how to make positive changes which can make a difference in lives both in and out of the classroom. One favorite NLP technique to communicate ideas and help someone tap into the unconscious self is to use metaphors. A particularly skillful master of the story metaphor was hypno-therapist Milton Erickson, who served Grinder and Bandler as a role model in this area. As most teachers know, metaphors can raise a learner's awareness of hidden resources but they can also identify limitations. Consider, for example the following story:

The Dancing Centipede

Once there was a centipede who delighted in dancing. At night when the moon began to rise and shed its soft light onto the grassy slope below, Centipede would stretch one of her several beautiful long legs. "Aaaahhh..." she would sigh into the cool night air. And then, she would close her eyes and begin to sway to the music of the nearby stream as it splashed over the pebbles and stones.

Slowly, at first, her numerous dainty feet started to move by two's and four's and ten's in a carefully choreographed pattern, faster and faster, until she found herself framed in her spotlight from the moon. Head thrown back, legs outstretched she belted in true Ethel Merman fashion "I'm just a Broadway Baby... 100 legs—each kicking higher than the last, "Struttin' my stuff..." 100 feet, each encased in a tiny gold slipper, "All over the earth to-night."

Now swinging from the branch of an abandoned hut, Bat wanted to join her – Top hat, tails, and all – but the movements were so ... amazing! So brilliant! So dazzling! So absolutely out of his league! He would have to settle for admiration only – and a dream.

From the water's shallows, Frog ribbeted appreciation and Cricket chirped as Centipede executed one multi-legged split after another, finally concluding with a twisting top spiral balancing herself deftly on the tips of her 50th right and left legs, all 98 others tucked one round the other. Goose was absolutely energized by the evening's performance and couldn't stop honking "Bravo's" as she waddled over to where Centipede paused still lost in her moment of artistic brilliance.

"Simply stunning," Lizard hissed and whistled.

"Oh, please, show us how you do it," cooed Dove from a branch.

"Yeesss, pleeaassee," they all shouted. "Tell us! Which foot do you start with? And which foot do you end with? *How do you know what to do?"*

"Quiet, everyone," said Centipede confidently untwirling herself with ease. Everybody moved closer to hear her words of wisdom. She smiled at the admiring audience in front of her, took a deep breath and said,

> *"Well, first I..." She paused, looked at her feet, moved several of them this way and that. "I..." And, then, she wobbled – ever so slightly – and a curious, confused expression came across her face.*
>
> *From that night on, Centipede never danced again.*
>
> (Adapted folk tale)

International students practice communication skills at graduation banquet with local residents at Lenoir-Rhyne College.

Although the talented Centipede was baffled into paralysis by questions exploring her technique, had she studied NLP, she probably would have danced after that night and, what's more, she could have learned how to share her skills with others. How can this metaphor be useful for teachers to learn about NLP and to share insights about behavior? Many teachers–and students–are like both the Centipede and her Admirers. They have a special skill (the Centipede) and, still they desire something more (the Admirers). They have a knack for doing some things well but suddenly become confused and stumped when trying to explain or analyze performance. What does that imply about skill or talents and, also, the thinking processes? How conscious are we of what we do? Is a particular skill inspired by the gods or is it a habit developed over time by persistence and practice?

Viola Spolin, the American artist-educator and author of several books on improvisational theatre techniques for children and adults, strongly objected to the concept of talent as a special genius. Spolin insisted that each of us, at birth, has a capacity to experience and as we progress through life, we either expand that capacity or we limit it.

> *We learn through experience and experiencing and no one teaches anyone anything. This is as true for the infant moving from kicking to crawling as it is the scientist with his equations. If the environment permits it, anyone can learn whatever he chooses to learn, and if the individual permits it, the environment will teach him everything it has to teach.*
>
> (Spolin, 1963)

Grinder and Bandler might disagree with Spolin that "no one teaches us anything,"but they would concur with her that students learn holistically, through an involvement which is mentally, physiologically and emotionally interconnected. In working with students, Spolin helped them to "re-form" through exercises that encouraged spontaneity and stimulated sub-conscious memories. In this way, Spolin claimed, students could free themselves from old frames of reference (habits or perceptual models) and discover the abundant resources hidden within.

NLP research on high achievers similar to Spolin, confirms that individual perceptions of reality, of personal effectiveness and particular limitations are based on the way our senses filter personal engagement with the world. Thus, we all program ourselves for success or failure from an early age through the perceptual models we create and which we identify as "reality." Students, for example, who do not perform well on exams often carry feelings of inadequacy into subsequent testing experiences or other aspects of their school lives. Teachers who assume that their communicative style serves students who know how to learn often become frustrated and demoralized when assignments are misunderstood. The anthropologist Carlos Castaneda describes this process of creating reality in metaphoric language.

> *Sorcerers say that we are inside a bubble. It is a bubble into which we are placed at the moment of our birth. At first, the bubble is open, but then it begins to close until it has sealed us in. The bubble is our perception. We live inside that bubble all of our lives and what we witness on its round walls is our own reflection.*
>
> *(Castaneda, 1974)*

Models and Modeling

Teachers who want to understand how they do what they do (Centipede) can find in NLP procedures to increase personal awareness. For those who want to move beyond perceptual and behavioral limitations (Centipede again), NLP can serve as a toolbox to liberate and empower. This freedom is at the heart of NLP and flows directly from the fundamental presuppositions we considered above. The roots of the NLP presuppositions can be traced back to those individuals that Grinder and Bandler chose to study and to model in the early days. Among the central subjects were anthropologists Gregory Bateson and Carlos Castaneda, linguists Noam Chomsky and Alfred Kozybski, and three distinguished psychotherapists: Virginia Satir (Family and Systems Therapy), Fritz Perls (Gestalt therapy) and Milton Erickson (Hypno-therapy).

The research focused on how these individuals used interpersonal and intrapersonal language to achieve their goals over and over again. But what were the thought processes that were occurring that helped them perform so successfully? Bandler and Grinder along with co-workers Robert Dilts, Judith DeLozier, Stephen Gilligan, and Leslie Cameron Bandler identified mental patterns interconnected with physiological, and linguistic ones that they then codified. Often these patterns, or models as they came to be known, were unconscious for the person who was modelling the behavior. If onewere to ask then, what makes NLP unique, the answer would be modeling as a practical tool to bring about rapid and effective behavioral change.

Moving Past Therapy

Over the last 15 years, NLP research has enriched the discipline and moved it to fields beyond therapy. Today, NLP is used by men and women in business, sports, the health and legal professions, teaching and learning. While some techniques in NLP borrow from studies being conducted in allied fields such as multiple intelligences, accelerated learning, and neuro-semantics, a primary emphasis is to integrate theories and develop techniques which are easy to use. Today, NLP training continues as it began with the basic premise that *the more aware people are of experiencing and processing reality, the more able they are to manage their lives.*

"Re-form," encouraged Spolin.

"Re-program," insists NLP, and here's a story about someone who did:

The Priest and the Thief

One evening as the Buddhist priest, Shichiri Kojun, was reciting his sutras, a man with a knife crept up behind him."Give me your money!" the man threatened. Without turning his head, Shichiri answered, "Do not disturb me. You will find the money in the cupboard near the wall." And then he resumed his recitation. A few moments later, Shichiri paused and called: "Don't take it all, though. I need to pay my taxes tomorrow."

The man returned a few coins to the cupboard and started towards the door. As he opened it, he heard Shichiri say, "Thank a person when you receive a gift."

The man called over his shoulder, "You are thanked," and he fled into the dark night. Within a few weeks, the man was arrested for theft. At his trial, Shichiri appeared with many others who claimed that the man had stolen from them. When it was Shichiri's turn to testify, he was asked if the accused man had stolen anything.

Shichiri replied, "No. He entered my house. He asked me for money. I told him that it was in my cupboard. He took some. And then he thanked me for it." When the man finished his prison term, he went to Shichiri and became his disciple.

Japanese Folk Tale

We don't know what Shichiri advised his disciple to do when they met again. We do know, however, that in their earlier encounters something significant occurred to cause the man to seek out Shichiri as a teacher. What was it he experienced? In the first encounter, Shichiri responds to the intruder not as a fixed identity, a "thief," but, instead, as someone who is "a human being in process," someone who is asking for money. It is significant that Schichiri is experiencing life *in the present*. He, therefore, does not entrap himself into a limited choice of action Telling the man where he will find money, Shichiri then makes three requests of him. The man agrees and does as Shichiri asks. It is logical, therefore, that in the courtroom when asked by the judges and lawyers to explain what happened, Shichiri can describe with full candor that one evening he encountered the man now in the dock, a man with whom he was in full rapport. In NLP terms, they had met for the first time and minimized their differences while maximizing their similarities. Many things are learned from this story, not the least of which is that if situations can change so, too, can a skillful communicator pace and lead another person to alter behavior. From an NLP perspective, Schichiri is a model/teacher. What the disciple/student learns from him is not described. But what we learn from the metaphor, in NLP terms, is that the teacher who remains in the present, flexible and open to possibilities can influence their students for a life-change and, most probably, for a life-time.

In NLP, models of excellence are both persons and patterns. The model patterns help learners to balance both conscious and unconscious aspects of thinking and lead them to break automatic and habitual responses. The model patterns also encourage learners to respond with more openness and to rely less on those self taught internal frames of reference which may be distorted or generalized. Teachers who model with NLP encourage students to try on multiple ways of thinking so that they can experience being in the here and now, alert and flexible and present. Being present means translating intentions into actions and paying careful attention to how others respond. It means changing what is not working for something else that does. It means responding with a different choice from the usual, learning and practicing how to say and do something different from what was said and done before. Someone once said that being present means learning to experience yourself as a verb, as a work in progress. If we start with that realization, our road will very likely be fascinating.

Author's Note

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Recommended Materials

NLP Magazines and Journals

Anchorpoint, 346 South 500 East, Suite 200, Salt Lake City, Utah 84102.
The NLP Connection, PO Box 120009-168, Scottsdale, Arizona, 85267.
Rapport, PO Box 78, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 2YP, UK.

NLP Web sites

Association of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (UK) modeling database, modeling projects, NLP education, information and articles, NLP for education and ADD learners.

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Using the Native Language Imaginatively in Foreign Language Textbooks

Hana Žofková

Translated from the Russian original
by Donna Farina and George Durman

Dr. Hana Žofková is a professor at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. Dr. Žofková has been teaching Russian for 30 years; many of her students go on to become teachers in Czech schools. With three colleagues (S. Jelinek, J. Folprechtová, and R. Hříbková) Dr. Žofková has written a textbook for Czech learners of Russian, some examples of which appear here as Jelinek et. al. 1996. Besides her native Czech, Dr. Žofková speaks Russian and German.

When creating a foreign language textbook, an important element to consider is how and to what extent the native language of the learner will be used. Anyone who has studied a foreign language knows that new words are learned by associating them with native-language words having the same meaning. Only through the native language can the more mature student fully understand a foreign word's meaning. This leads to two contradictory questions: how can teachers exploit the influence of the native language (L1) in second or foreign language (L2) learning, and how can they simultaneously diminish the strong influence of L1 on the L2 learning process. Many of the methods proposed for using L1 in the study of L2 have also been contradictory in nature. We propose here that the imaginative use of L1 in foreign language textbooks can offer great advantages to the student. Through the native language, students can move more quickly to creative and independent linguistic activity in L2.

Relevant Questions

Previously, the pedagogical literature debated whether the native language should be excluded from the L2 learning process; that is, whether L1->L2 translation should be introduced, and whether L1 and L2 should ever be compared in the classroom. Presently, no one doubts that the native language can be used as a teaching tool; in any case, it would be impossible to completely exclude L1 from the L2 learning process. Our quite important task now is to describe under what circumstances using L1 yields the most positive results. We must determine what is the appropriate amount of L1 to use at each stage in the learning process. How are we to select, organize and present native and foreign language data? What are the best methods of reinforcement and practice? How are we to test students, depending on their age and the type of school they attend? We already know that the foreign language teacher should not make students memorize information, but should involve them in the active acquisition of knowledge, and teach them to be independent in their learning. Ultimately, what is involved here is the personality of each student: the ideal learning process must be designed to facilitate the development of each unique individual. It is clear that the role of the imagination in language learning must not be limited to the use of L2, but must extend to the use of L1 as well.

Implicit and Explicit Uses of Language

The pedagogical literature usually cites two different methods for using the native language in foreign language learning. In the first of these–*implicit use*–students are not aware that L1 is being used. In this method, students give more attention to aspects of L2 that are considered "more difficult" from the point of view of their L1. Aspects of L2 considered "closer" to students' native language are practiced less. The implicit method seems to be found everywhere: in the organization of language programs, in textbook creation, in lesson planning, in the selection of teaching materials and in classroom exercises and drills.

While the validity of implicit use is widely recognized, such is not the case with the second method, the direct or *explicit use* of L1. Some teachers consider it counterproductive or even dangerous to use the native language during a foreign language class. However, I believe that by directly comparing selected examples from L1 and L2, students can immediately understand similarities and differences between languages, and are then better prepared to use L2 correctly during practice. Such direct comparisons take several forms, which we will now consider.

1. Simple Direct Comparison

Native and foreign language equivalents are presented side-by-side with no additional explanations. Most often this is a literal translation, used to introduce a variety of L2 constructions, multiword combinations or phrases that do not correspond to those used in L1. The purpose of direct comparisons is to demonstrate the structural characteristics of the language being studied. For example, in a Russian textbook intended for English speakers (Khavronina et al. 1991), the use of the Russian[1] prepositions ***na*** and ***v*** is demonstrated by the following juxtaposed expressions:

Specialize (in)	***Spetsializirovat'sia***
sales of computers	*na prodazhe komp'iuterov*
marketing	*v oblasti marketinga*

In a Russian textbook for Czech speakers (Jelínek et al. 1996), ways of asking and telling one's name are compared in the two languages:

Russian	***Czech***	
Kak tebia zovut?	*Jak se jmenjes?*	*(What is your name?)*
Menia zovut Katia	*Jmenuji se Kát'a.*	*(My name is Katya.)*
Ia Vova.	*(Já) jsem Vova*	*(I'm Vova.)*
Kto eto?	*Kdo je to?*	*(Who is it?)*
Eto ne Ian, a Iakub.	*To není Jan, ale Jakub*	*(That's not Jan, but Jakub.)*

Similar examples appear in the Russian textbook for German speakers (Wolter et al. 1992):

Russian	***German***	
Kto eto?	*Wer ist das?*	*(Who is it?)*
Eto Ina?	*Ist das Ina?*	*(Is that Ina?)*
Eto Ina i Zoia.	*Das sind Ina und Soia.*	*(It's Ina and Zoia.)*

2. In-depth Comparison

Native and foreign language equivalents are compared along with an explanation of similarities and differences. The following is another example from the Russian textbook for Czechs (Jelínek et al. 1996):

Unlike Czech, in Russian there is no vocative case. The nominative case is used in instances where Czech would use vocative:

Russian	***Czech***	
***Babushka**, kto eto?*	*Babičko, kdo to je?*	*(Grandmother, who is it?)*
***Dedushka**, eto ty?*	*Dědečku, to jsi ty?*	*(Grandfather, is that you?)*
*Privet, **Sasha!***	*Ahoj, Sašo!*	*(Hi, Sasha!)*

Another example of in-depth comparison comes from the Russian textbook for Germans (Wolter et al. 1992):[2]

*In Russian, an action is negated by **ne**. In contrast to the German, the Russian **ne** is placed just before the conjugated verb form:*

Russian	***German***	
*govorit **ne** po-russki.*	*Er **nicht** spricht russisch.*	*(He does not speak Russian.)*

When the subject of a question is a personal pronoun, it is placed–unlike in German–before the predicate:

Russian	***German***	
*Chto **ty** chitaesh'?*	*Was liest **du**?*	*(What are you reading?)*

---

[1] In all of the examples in this paper, Russian is transliterated from cyrillic into Roman script.

[2] The translators would like to thank Maria Rost for translating the German texts.

The validity of the explicit use method in L2 teaching, particularly in high schools, can be discussed from a psychological point of view. Czech high school students, especially in their last two years, tend to make comparisons between their L1 and L2, to link new information (about L2) with what they have already learned, and to organize and systematize grammatical information. On the other hand, numerous authors have pointed out that the direct L1-to-L2 comparisons of the explicit use method do not help all students, depending on their learning styles. For some students such in-depth comparisons make language learning more rather than less difficult, by overloading them with more information than they can process and put into use. We can add that such comparisons do nothing to develop the linguistic independence of students, or to increase their active use of the foreign language inside the classroom or out.

Dr. Žofková (left) enjoys a moment after class with some of her students in the Czech Republic.

The Middle Ground: Imaginative Use of the Native Language

There is a middle ground between the in-depth L1/L2 comparisons that may be detrimental to some students, and abolishing altogether comparisons that do help many students. This middle involves the imagination. It is possible to limit the use of comparative examples and move students toward more creative and independent linguistic activity, involving problem solving and critical thinking. The examples below indicate several different ways in which the native language can be used effectively. They fall into three major categories: exercises in observation (inductive reasoning); visualization (through graphics); and presentations of incorrect language material.

A. Exercises in Observation (Inductive Reasoning)

On the basis of their own observations of L2, students can be taught to formulate independently conclusions about similarities and differences between languages. In the Russian textbook for Czech speakers (Jelínek et al. 1996), we have the following exercise, intended to call students' attention to the difference between "soft" or palatalized (left column) and "hard" or unpalatalized (right column) pronunciations of the Russian consonants /d/, /n/ and /t/. In Czech, the same three consonants also occur in hard and soft phonetic variants. The exercise below helps students to understand on their own that Czech and Russian are similar with respect to the pronunciation of these three consonants.

Compare the pronunciation of the boldfaced Russian consonants below. Can you find similar examples in Czech?

Nadia (Nadya), diadia (uncle), poidyosh' (you go)	*dai (give), dom (house), dumat' (think)*
u menia (I have), Tane (Tanya), Vaniu (Vanya)	*nasha (our), ekonomist (economist)*
tyotia (aunt), interesnyi (interesting), telefon (telephone)	*fotografia (photograph), eto (this), brata (brother), bratu (brother)*

This exercise is followed by others that allow students to draw conclusions about how the two languages differ in their soft/hard consonant systems. While Russian has fifteen soft/hard consonant pairs, Czech is limited to just three: /d/, /n/ and /t/. Such textbook exercises allow the language teacher to limit the amount of directly comparative material introduced in class. They also develop students' ability to make such comparisons themselves. It goes without saying that teachers must check to insure that students are drawing accurate conclusions.

B. Visualization

This technique does not use statements of rules, and usually it does not employ direct, explicit comparisons. A wide variety of graphics is used to help call students' attention to possible difficulties in L2, so that they can draw conclusions for themselves. For example, the use of boldface, italics, upper and lower case letters, arrows, boxes, etc. can help students see similarities and differences between elements. Sometimes visualization is used in observational exercises, as is shown below (Jelínek et al. 1996). The large and small boxes above each column are a graphical means of indicating that the words in the left column are all stressed on the first syllable, and those in the right column on the second. (The stressed syllable is symbolized by the larger box.)

Listen to the Russian words below. How do the two columns of words differ?

□ ▫	▫ □
mama (mother)	*zovut (they call)*
Anna (Anna)	*ona (she)*
Vova (Vova)	*menia (me)*
eto (this)	*tebia (you)*
Vania (Vanya)	*moia (my)*
Tania (Tanya)	*Anton (Anton)*

It is important to note that each language will use graphic techniques differently, to describe different linguistic phenomena. For Czech learners of Russian, word stress is a problem that lends itself well to visualization techniques. Because in Czech stress always falls on the first syllable of a word, it is difficult for the learner to master Russian stress, since any syllable of a Russian word can be stressed. The next two examples are from the Russian textbook for German speakers (Wolter et al. 1992). In the first one, arrows are used to indicate the position of the word stress in two-, three- and four- syllable number words; the lines indicate the number of syllables.

Pay attention to the pronunciation of the unaccented vowels:

↓ __	__ __ ↓	↓ __ __	__ __ ↓ __
dvadtsat' (20)	*piat'desiat (50)*	*sem'desiat (70)*	*devianosto (90)*
tridtsat' (30)	*shest'desiat (60)*	*vosem'desiat (80)*	
sorok (40)			

German learners of Russian have difficulties saying some preposition-plus-noun combinations. The exercise below uses the symbol "⊔" to emphasize that the Russian preposition (though written as a separate word) is not pronounced separately, but as part of the following noun. The example uses both ***v*** and ***f*** to represent the preposition, to indicate that in certain contexts ***v*** is pronounced as voiceless [**f**]:

v: ***v***⊔magazine (at the store)
v⊔basseine (at the swimming pool)
v⊔zooparke (in the zoo)
v⊔restorane (at the restaurant),
v⊔diskoteke (at the discoteque)

f: ***v***⊔komnate (in the room)
v⊔klasse (in the classroom)

For both Czech and Russian learners of German, the grammatical gender of German nouns can present a problem. In their native languages, words of equivalent meaning often have different genders. The following example is from a German textbook for Czech speakers (Kouřimská et al. 1994). Circles, boxes and triangles are used to highlight the grammatical differences due to gender. Below, the circle is replaced by all caps, the box by boldface, and the triangle by underlining.

Pay attention to the gender of the nouns and pronouns below:

Der *Tee ist gut. Ich möchte* ***ihn*** *trinken. (The tea is good. I would like to drink it.)*

DIE Brücke ist alt. Ich möchte SIE fotografieren. (The bridge is old. I would like to photograph it.)

Das Haus is neu. Ich möchte es malen. (The house is new. I want (would like) to paint it.)

C. Presentations of Incorrect Language Material

We acknowledge that many pedagogues condemn the use of incorrect forms in textbooks or tests. Such presentations occur in a variety of forms: exercises in which mistakes must be corrected by the learner, or multiple-choice tests with incorrect forms in some of the items. In this author's opinion, it makes sense to include error correction exercises in the program of future teachers, in order to develop their editing and correcting skills. It is a different matter when such exercises are used in the schools, where the students may not have the sophistication to distinguish between correct and incorrect forms. Nevertheless, some textbooks do use incorrect forms, even in elementary-school language programs, as the following example shows. This Russian textbook for German learners (Wolter et al. 1992) contains an exercise to correct word stress in adjectives of feminine gender; we have added boldface to indicate which word is incorrectly stressed and should be noticed by the student. Whether such an exercise is really useful to elementary school students is debatable:

Below are the pronunciation patterns of nine adjectives. One of them is wrong. Which one?

/ ___ ___	___ / ___	___ / ___ ___
novaia (new)	*bol'shaia (big)*	*krasivaia (beautiful)*
staraia (old)	*liubimaia (favorite)*	*plokhaia (bad)*
drevniaia (ancient)	***krásnaia*** *(red)*	*khoroshaia (good)*

Hana Žofková comments on the papers of her students.

In situations where the target language is not used outside of the classroom (foreign rather than second language learning), we believe that the use of incorrect forms can sometimes be beneficial. The benefits seem to be more in the area of vocabulary and meaning rather than in pronunciation differences. My experience in teaching Russian words that sound almost the same as Czech words of different meanings ("false friends") shows that the presentation of correct forms only is not enough to prevent mistakes. The Russian textbook for Czech learners (Jelínek et al. 1996) cites many situations in which Russian words are used incorrectly because of their closeness to Czech words. For example: Russian *zhivot* 'stomach' is confused with Czech *život* 'life'; Russ. *chyorstvyi* 'stale' is confused with Cz. *čerstvý* 'fresh'; Russ. *styl* 'chair' with Cz. *stůl* 'table'; Russ. *gor'kii* 'bitter' and Cz. *horký* 'hot'; Russ. *podvodnik* 'submarine worker, submariner' and Cz. *podvodník* 'deceiver, liar'; Russ. *krasnyi* 'red' and Cz. *krásný* 'beautiful'; Russ. *pozor* 'shame' and Cz. *pozor* 'careful'. The following dialog from Jelínek et al. (1996) illustrates how students' attention is directed to this type of error:

Zuzana (Zuzanochk) is Czech; Viktor (Vitia) and Dima are Russian.

Zuzana: *Rebiata, budete borshch? (Guys, do you want some borsht?)*
Viktor: *Konechno, budem, Zuzanochka. (Of course we do, Zuzanochka.)*
Zuzana: *Pozor, Vitia, eto gor'koe! (Shame, Vitia, it's bitter! [She means to say: Careful Vitia, it's hot!])*
Viktor: *?!? [He doesn't understand her.]*
Dima: *Zuzana, tak nel'zia skazat' po-russki. Ob"iasni mne, pozhaluista, chto takoe pozor i gor'koe? (Zuzana, you can't say it like that in Russian. Please explain what you mean by "pozor" and "gor'koe".)*

My experience has shown that exposure to such incorrect usages helps students master the correct usage of Russian false friends; it does not interfere with learning.

Conclusion

We must emphasize that in today's foreign language classroom, the comparison of the native and foreign languages can be an effective way of encouraging the critical thinking of students. They develop a deeper understanding of their native language and a broader linguistic horizon.

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